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DESMOND,

A

NOVEL,

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

CHARLOTTE SMITH.

VOLUME II.

DUBLIN:

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DESMOND.

LETTER I.

TO MR. DESMOND.

Bath, May 17th, 1791.

IN purſuance of my promiſe, which, though it was, perhaps, indiſcreet to give it, I hold ſacred now that it is given; I write to you, my dear friend, to relate an hiſtory that cannot but wound you moſt cruelly, and add to that melancholy deſpondence too viſible in your laſt letters—I believe I told you* that Geraldine was ſuddenly returned to London, at the requeſt of her huſband, and that his ſtyle of living at his houſe in Seymour-ſtreet, far from having been reduced by the late untoward circumſtances that befel him there, was more extravagant and profuſe than before—He was ſuppoſed to have won conſiderable ſums of money from the Duke de Romagnecourt, and ſome other Frenchmen of

* In a letter which does not appear.

fortune, emigrants in England; and it was to do the honours of his houſe to theſe new friends, that his wife, who could no longer plead the excuſe of ill health, was compelled, in obedience to his wiſhes, to leave her quiet retirement at Sheen, and return to witneſs follies ſhe could not check, and to ſee the progreſs of ruin, it was impoſſible for her to prevent.

In may way through London, about three weeks ago, I called at her door, merely to make an enquiry after her, and not expecting to ſee her—The ſervant, however, whom I ſpoke to, informed me ſhe had been ſome days in London, was then at home, and would, he believed, ſee me. I ſent up my name, and, on entering the room, was gratified by the expreſſion of pleaſure, which I ſaw on the countenance of Geraldine, who, inſtead of receiving me with the formality of mere acquaintance, held out her hand to me, and called me her good friend.

The features of a gentleman, who was ſitting with her, wore, I thought, a very different meaning—This was Colonel Scarſdale, who looked at me as if he at once contemned me as a rural Squire, and diſliked me as an unwelcome intruder—while the evident preference that Geraldine gave me by addreſſing all her converſation to me, and enquiring ſolicitouſly about you, ſeemed every moment to encreaſe his diſpleaſure; ſtill, however, he ſtaid—now humming an air—and now making a violent noiſe with the little boy, for whom he affects the moſt extravagant fondneſs; and though I wiſhed very much to have ſome converſation with Geraldine, in which, notwithſtanding her reſerve, I might have learned more of her real ſituation, than I can gather from public report—I found the Colonel determined

determined to ſtay too; and that he was ſo much domeſticated in the houſe, that he dreſſed there, and was, that day, to make one of a large party that were coming to dinner—As I was under the neceſſity of leaving London early the next morning, I had no opportunity of attempting another interview with her; but as ſoon as I arrived at Bath, I waited on her mother and her ſiſter, and fortunately found the latter at home alone.

Fanny Waverly received me with great pleaſure, and was not leſs early and eager in her enquiries after you, than Geraldine had been two days before—When I told her that you were, from your own account, ſo far recovered of your accident, that you talked of leaving off the ſling in which your arm had been confined—her eyes ſparkled with pleaſure; but when I added, that you ſpoke leſs favourably of your general health, and had no thoughts of returning ſoon to England, ſhe evidently drooped in dejection; and when I led the diſcourſe towards Geraldine, as I immediately did, ſhe diſſolved in tears.

She told me, that the ſituation of her ſiſter gave her the moſt cruel alarms; that Verney was moſt undoubtedly ruined beyond remedy; and that ſhe feared his real reaſon for having brought back Geraldine to his houſe, was, a hope of perſuading her to give up her ſettlement, and enable him to ſell his Yorkſhire eſtate, which, ſaid ſhe, "I have too much reaſon to believe my ſiſter will conſent to—Nor is this all my fear—Geraldine is young, and very lovely—Every man of intrigue, who ſees ſuch a woman neglected, or even worſe treated by her huſband, is ready to form deſigns for himſelf—I know

there are, at this time, many such surrounding my sister; and though the purity of her heart, the excellence of her understanding, and her excessive tenderness for her children, are securities for her conduct, which I cannot a moment doubt; yet, I have such an opinion of Verney, that I am not certain he is not capable of the most infamous proceedings, even towards his wife, if, by such, he could obtain the means of supporting a little longer the wild career, which his mad infatuation represents as the only one worthy of a man of fashion."

This remark added to what I had made in town on the behaviour of Colonel Scarsdale, and my opinion of Verney, which is not at all better than that Fanny entertains of him, startled me extremely—"If such, my dear Miss Waverly," said I, "are your apprehensions for your sister, surely your mother, or your brother, ought to interfere, before they can be realized—Surely, they ought to rescue this excellent and lovely woman from the power of a husband, of whom such horrors can be suspected."—"Alas! Mr. Bethel," replied she, "how can I mention such dreadful ideas to my mother? who, conscious, I believe, that Geraldine was the victim of duty, and married only in compliance with her and my father's wishes, now endeavours to escape the conviction, that she has condemned her to the most dreadful of all destinies, and will not see or hear, if she can by any means escape it, what is, unhappily, too evident to the rest of the world—Wrapt up, as her whole soul has ever been in my brother, she has always thought, that in marrying her daughters, in what is called, a prudent way, that is, to men of large fortune, she had taken sufficient

trouble

trouble about them; she never considered whether there were any other sources of unhappiness than want of money; nor did it ever occur to her, that in giving Geraldine to a man of fortune and family, she overlooked circumstances in the character of Verney, (though, when he married, his character was not developed) that might make her daughter liable to all the distresses and inconveniencies of poverty—To be convinced that it is so, is to be convinced, that she has wanted either judgment or tenderness, and she takes refuge in cards and company against the reproaches of her own heart—I have ventured, however, since I received some hints of the probability there was, that Geraldine should be persuaded to part with her settlement, to implore my mother's attention to a circumstance so destructive, but she impatiently answered, that I talked nonsense; for that the trustees to her marriage-articles, would take especial care to prevent her committing such a folly —As to any other fears I entertain, such as those I have just now mentioned, my mother would treat them as a romantic chimera of mine, and resent my supposing them probable or possible— How then I can venture to make representations to my mother, which would, probably, be ill received and fruitless? or which, were she to attend to them a moment, she would, perhaps, find some occasion to condemn as futile, because she would dislike to do that, which, if she allows them well founded, she ought to do—I mean, to take her daughter to her own house, as the only proper asylum, if she is compelled to quit that of her husband—This, however, I know my mother will avoid, for Geraldine will never leave her children, and my mother dislikes their

their noiſe, and the trouble they occaſion in an houſe; and ſhe is, in ſhort, for why may I not ſpeak the truth to you? juſt at that period of life, when the character retains little that is feminine, but a love of trifles, and a redoubled attachment to ſome one weakneſs that has long been cheriſhed—Such is her violent partiality to my brother, for whom (notwithſtanding the little encouragement his entrance into the world has given to ſuch hopes) ſhe looks forward towards titles and dignities, which ſhe imagines his fortune will command, and his merit deſerve—There are ſome hearts, Mr. Bethel, that have not room for more than one ſtrong affection—Such, I ſuppoſe, is my mother's—The reſt of it, which her daughters might have occupied, is filled with trifling objects—and—but I believe, you will think me very wrong," continued ſhe, "and, perhaps, I have already ſaid too much—I meant, however, to account to you for omitting to do, what certainly appears moſt rational under the apprehenſions I have ventured to expreſs to you."

I was ſo much ſtruck by the manner, as well as the purport of this anſwer—ſo concerned for the ſituation of Geraldine—and ſo affected by the tender intereſt her ſiſter thus expreſſed, that I could neither find words, immediately to do juſtice to my feelings, nor, in my mind, any remedy, for the unhappy circumſtances that excited them—Your charge, my dear Deſmond, to uſe your fortune without ſcruple, in the ſervice of Geraldine, cannot here be executed; for to her, it would be worſe than uſeleſs, while her huſband would derive from it the means of continuing his career of vice and folly yet ſomething ſhould be done, and done immediately,

diately, to save her sensible heart from the anguish it must endure for her children—to spare her the mortification and misery she must feel in seeing herself at the mercy of a wretch, who is believed capable of such actions as Fanny Waverly, I fear with too much reason, represents him as likely to practise. As I wished to have time to reflect on what measures were the most proper, since of her own family there seemed so little to hope, I took leave of Miss Waverly, and returned to my lodgings; but my thoughts dwelt in vain on the subject—I saw no way in which it was proper, or even possible, for the most disinterested friendship to interfere between a man and his wife—If Verney is determined to ruin himself and her, I see not by what means it can be prevented, or on what pretence, even her own family, can separate them, while he chuses she should remain the victim of his dissipation, or hopes to derive, from the admiration she excites, the power of continuing it; for to such a plan Fanny Waverly undoubtedly alluded; and I have since heard, that Scarsdale, who has been long trying to recommend himself to the favour of Geraldine in vain, has found it much easier to embarrass her husband's affairs so much, as to have a prospect of obtaining that influence over her, from necessity, which, from any other motive he could never obtain—But, I think, if I know any thing of the spirit and temper of that incomparable woman; she will spurn, with detestation, a monster, who pursues the gratification of his passions by perfidy so atrocious—There was a time, when new to the world, and unhackneyed in the ways of men, I should have felt indignation at the mere representation of such characters of those as Verney and Scarsdale,

dale, and ſhould have thought it a miſantrophic libel on human nature—But, alas! I know that ſuch men do exiſt; and I know that it is very difficult to ſave Geraldine from them, if they unite in deſtroying her peace and her reputation —I here break off, to keep an appointment I have made with Fanny Waverly, to meet at a bookſellor's ſhop, and walk together—You will ſmile, or rather, you would ſmile, at any other time, in figuring to yourſelf, your ſage Mentor, making an aſſignation with a ſprightly girl of nineteen or tweney—But this is the only way, by which I can obtain an opportunity of talking with her alone—And I am one of the favored few, whom her diſcreet mother allows to converſe with her—Louiſa, who is a great favorite, and who loves Miſs Waverly extremely, is, however, to make a third in our party.

May 18th, 1791.

Well! my friend—I am returned from my *tête-à-tête* with this young beauty, and with an aching heart, but aching from other motives than thoſe of love—The week that has elapſed ſince I laſt converſed with her about Geraldine, has produced ſome of the events ſhe then expected, and others, of which ſhe had no apprehenſion.

Waverly, your travelling companion, is ſuddenly returned to England, while his mother and his ſiſter thought him at Venice, with a nymph whom he had brought from the Iſle of Cypreſs, whither he went with ſome other young Engliſhmen—Some miſadventure, by which he loſt the lady, diſguſted him with their ſociety, and meeting at Genoa, with a Captain of a merchantman,

chantman, juſt coming to England, he embarked, after half-an-hour's debate, with only one of his ſervants, leaving the others with his baggage to follow; and having a very quick paſſage, he landed near London; and in fourteen hours arrived at Bath, to the extreme ſatisfaction of his mother, who received him, as if the whole time of his abſence had been paſſed in refining his manners, and cultivating his underſtanding—I believe (though Fanny does not ſay ſo) that there is no very viſible improvement in either; but that he has picked up, at every place, ſome ſmall ſpecimen of the reigning follies, without having dropped thoſe that he had acquired before he ſet out—But his mother, who believes he has completed the courſe of ſtudy and education which is requiſite to a man of fortune, and "of a certain ſtyle," is now moſt eagerly ſolicitous to have him married; and Fanny tells me, that, from every appearance, at preſent, it is highly probable, that, by the mutual endeavours of the two elder ladies, Mrs. Fairfax and Mrs. Waverly, this great event may be accompliſhed—The eldeſt Miſs Fairfax (your fair ariſtocrate, at Margate) is the lady whoſe happy deſtiny it will be, to fix this fluctuating lover.

This is a matter of importance no otherwiſe, than, as it occupies entirely the maternal feelings of Mrs. Waverly, and prevents her giving any attention to the ſituation of her daughter Verney, and will as certainly be a reaſon againſt her affording her, even that pecuniary aſſiſtance, which I greatly fear ſhe may now want, for the cataſtrophe of Verney's affairs, ſo long foreſeen, is at length arrived—The ſudden encreaſe of expence which he ruſhed into in London, ended

in his giving up the leaſe of the houſe, and all its furniture, to his creditors; and it is advertiſed for ſale on the 30th inſtant—Geraldine, and her children, have, of courſe, left it; but not to go to Mooreſly Park, which is made over for a term of years, with the furniture and ſtock, to Colonel Scarſdale, as is ſaid, towards the diſcharge of a conſiderable debt, of what is called honor—Verney himſelf, who ſeems totally inſenſible to the ſufferings of his wife, and has left her to ſtruggle againſt them alone, is either gone, or going to Germany with the Duke de Romagne-court, and his party, who are about to join the exiled French Princes—Fanny Waverly told me, with many tears, that her ſiſter was gone into a ſmall lodging at Kenſington, for thoſe at Sheen, humble as they once appeared, ſhe now thought too expenſive for her; that ſhe did not intend to remain ſo near London, but to find ſome cheap retirement in a diſtant country, where ſhe might conceal her ſorrows from thoſe, to whom the ſight of them would be oppreſſive. —Thus, my dear Deſmond, I have executed the moſt uneaſy taſk I ever undertook, that of relating the calamities that ſeem likely to overwhelm our charming friend—Be not, however, in pain about her immediate ſituation, as to money—I have ſettled with Fanny Waverly the means of being, for the preſent, her banker, without her knowing that any but her own family execute this office—And I have entreated this amiable girl to endeavour to obtain leave of her mother to go to her ſiſter in this hour of bitter diſtreſs —This, however, is a permiſſion that Fanny has already ſolicited in vain; nor can ſhe obtain of Mrs. Waverly any other attention to the cruel ſituation of Geraldine, than what the old lady thinks

thinks neceſſary, to prevent the circumſtances ſhe is under, from bringing any ſort of diſgrace on the reſt of the family, and injuring her preſent projects, in regard to her ſon, which are alone near her heart.

I direct this to St. Germains, where your laſt letter tells me you will, by this time, be arrived, to remain ſome time, I cannot imagine why, and do not aſk, as if you had choſen I ſhould know, you would probably have told me—However, my buſineſs is to forward this letter to you, by as quick a conveyance as poſſible—I luckily have an opportunity of doing ſo, by a ſervant belonging to an acquaintance of mine, who is going to rejoin his maſter at Paris. I ſhall be impatient to hear from you—Let me ſoon have that ſatisfaction; and let me hear that the deſpondence is gone, which, at your age, and with your character, is a weakneſs you ought not to indulge.—Adieu!

Moſt faithfully your's,

E. BETHEL.

LETTER II.

TO MISS WAVERLY.

May 29th 1791.

"AT length my Fanny, I begin to recover—It is now three daye ſince I have been ſettled at my new abode, and returning tranquillity—I mean outward tranquillity, (for that of the heart and ſpirit can never more be mine) gives me a little time to collect my troubled thoughts—

"And on the heat and flame of my endurance,
Sprinkle cool patience."*

But be not uneaſy about me—I am not ill—I am only languid from the ſeverity of my paſt ſufferings, and that languor is every day decreaſing.

My two eldeſt children are quite well; and my little George is as gaily playing on the turf here, as he uſed to be on that of the lawn at Lin-

* Shakeſpeare.

well,

well, or the park at Mooresly—places, of which I once hoped, he would be the inheritor—But, of my disappointed hopes, my lovely boy is unconscious!—yet he continually brings tears into my eyes, by asking, why we came hither?—what is become of his papa, of the servants, and the horses, whose names they had taught him, and of the maid who used to wait upon me?—I endeavour to divert these infantine enquiries as much as I can, for they affect me more than even my own melancholy reflections—Fortunately it is a season when he is easily amused—I send him out with his sister and his maid into the surrounding meadows, where, after their maid has dressed their hats with cowslips, orchisses, cuckoo-flowers, and golden-cups—my Harriet brings home her lap full of these "gay children of the May," and, in her imperfect language, says, they are for "dear mama."

While my little prattlers are absent, I hang over the cradle of my infant William, whose health has again been sadly disordered by all the anxiety I have endured; yet, for his sake, I endeavoured to repress those acute feelings with which my heart was torn in pieces; but such were their nature, that it was impossible my health should not be affected, and, of course, that of the child, who, under such circumstances, I have, perhaps, done wrong to continue nourishing at my breast, especially as I think he has never recovered the first shock he received, when, at his birth, I first knew so much, and so suddenly, of the disarranged state of Mr. Verney's circumstances—Compared with the loss of my child, every other evil would be as nothing; yet, perhaps, I ought not to wish him to live, since to live is but to suffer.—But again,

my

my dear ſiſter, I check theſe mournful thoughts, with which I ought not to oppreſs you; and again I aſſure you, that when none of theſe apprehenſions aſſail my heart, I am not ſo unhappy as you ſay you fear I am—if I obtain reſolution enough to look calmly at the change which has befallen me, I ſee much leſs to regret than moſt people would diſcover—The only pleaſure I have loſt in loſing high affluence, is that of having the power to befriend the unhappy, to whom I can now give only my tears; but, for the reſt, what have I loſt, that I ought to lament?—The turbulent and joyleſs ſocieties which Mr. Verney loved, were to me only fatiguing and diſagreeable—The parties of faſhionable men that he continually collected, offered me neither rational converſation, nor permanent friendſhip—and the women, with whom I was, in conſequence of theſe connections, compelled to aſſociate, were ſo inſipid, or ſo vain; ſo devoted to the card-table, or occupied by the rage of being admired, that their acquaintance gave me as little pleaſure as mine ſeemed to give them; and our intercourſe was, after two or three formal dinners, reduced to the ſlight civility of ſending cards to each other four or five times in a winter. The fineries in which Mr. Verney's vanity dreſſed me out, (he called it love, I think, for a little time) never gave me a moment's pleaſure; and when laſt year, Colonel Scarſdale perſuaded him, that I ought to be preſented, and appear ſometimes at court, I was perfectly convinced that ſuch ceremonies were for me the heavieſt puniſhments that could be deviſed; and, indeed, few of thoſe whoſe pride or intereſt made their attendance on them more frequent, were apparently more delighted than I was, for they

they ſeemed univerſally to feel under all the apparent gaiety and ſplendor the influence of the *Dæmon ennui*—

" That realm he rules, and in ſuperb attire,
Viſits each earthly palace *"

Now, I believe, my Fanny, I am for ever exempt from being a viſitor where this hideous phantom holds his eternal reign; and he will not, I truſt, ſeek me in the farm houſe I now inhabit, and which I am going to deſcribe to you.

The ſituation of it is charming—It ſtands on a riſing ground among meadows, of which poetry, in the moſt flowery language, could hardly exaggerate the beauty—Through theſe yellow meads, the Wye takes its " ſinous courſe," till its progreſs is concealed by projecting hills, or rather mountains, riſing beyond the meadows; their ſummits bare and rocky, their ſides clothed with woods, which, at this time, exhibit every varied tint of vivid and early vegetation—Forgive me, if I borrow here the aid of a poet, whoſe powerful pen, with more than the magic of the pencil, brings whatever he deſcribes immediately before the eye.

" No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
Tho' each its hue peculiar; paler ſome,
And of a wannish grey, the willow ſuch;
And poplar, that with ſilver lines his leaf;
And aſh, far ſtretching his umbrageous arm;
Of deeper green the elm; and deeper ſtill,
Lord of the woods, the long-ſurviving oak;
Some glofſy-leaved and ſhining in the ſun,
The maple, and beech of oily nuts
Prolific; and the lime at dewy eve
Diffuſing odours.†"

* Hayley.

† Cowper.

Beneath

Beneath these varied woods are a tract of orchards, now covered with bloom, giving completely the idea of the

"Primavera candida e vermiglia.*"

A cottage or two, almost embosomed among the trees, are marked rather by the smoke arising from their chimney's, than by their concealed thatch; but thus dimly seen, they give cheerfulness to the landscape—Behind the house, the country wears quite another aspect—It rises abruptly into small knolls, too steep for the plough, and, from the nature of the soil, not much worth cultivation; since it is in the lower part a black moor, and the hillocks are of yellow sand, producing little but the heath and the whortle-berry†—The higher ridges, furze, or thorns, with here and there, in the hollows, tufts of self-planted oaks.

From this rude tract of country, the garden of this house is divided, in some parts, by an old wall, in others, by a thick hedge of yew and holly, the growth of centuries; for this is an old manorial residence; and beside the long row of firs, of very ancient date, that shade part of the garden, has many marks of having been once the abode of opulent possessors, who ornamented it in the taste of the days in which they lived. The last improvements in the house appear to have been made in the time of Elizabeth and James the First; but those in the garden are rather, perhaps, in the style that was imported

* Petrarch.

† Whortle-berry, or hurts. *Vaccinium Myrtillus.*

from

from Holland by William, when he was sent for to secure the liberty of Englishmen, and teach them to curtail that of their trees—I mean the taste which decorated our gardens with rows of evergreens, formally planted, and cut into the imagined shapes of men, peacocks, and sundry other forms—

" Gorgons and Hydras, and Chimeras dire."

The last inhabitant of the house, was an old and rich farmer, who had no relish for these monuments of former elegance; but the wife of him who now rents it, and of whom I hire my apartments, told me, with great exultation, that *she* had caused one of the men, at his leisure hours, to clip them into their former beauty, and " make them fit to be seen, all's one, as folks say, they used to be in the old Squire's time."—But, as this rustic sculptor, of vegetables is not very expert in his art, the box, the holly, and the yew, have lost all resemblance to themselves, without finding any other—In the borders beneath them, however, there are a great many flowers, whose roots have survived those who planted them, and these are even scattered over the rough parts of the enclosure, which is given up to the culinary productions, or left wholly uncultivated

" Along the waste, where once the garden smiled,
And where still many a garden flower grows wild.*"

And it is among these, which are now peeping through the grass, or blooming, unseen, among

* Goldsmith.

the

the thyme, balm, and lavender, that I, in my melancholy meditations, repeat

" The tender roſe which ſeems in winter dead,
Revives in Spring, and lifts its dewy head:
But we—the great, the glorious, and the wiſe!
When once the hand of death has clos'd our eyes—*"

. . . . . .

Or rather, the lighter comment of a very agreeable French authoreſs on this text, which concludes with

" Mais hélas!—pour vouloir revivre,
La vie eſt il un bien ſi doux?
Quand nous l'aimons tant, ſongeons nous
De combien de chagrins, ſa perte nous delivre?
Elle n'eſt qu'un amas de craintes, de douleurs,
De travaux, de ſoucis, de peines.
Pour qui connoit les miſeres humaines;
Mourir n'eſt pas le plus grands des malheurs.†"

But I am getting again into reflections, which I blame myſelf for indulging, and moralizing, when I undertook to give you a picture of my abode.

The houſe itſelf is very old; wide, projecting caſements, divided by heavy ſtone work, a great brick hall, and

" Paſſages that lead to nothing."

May give you ſome idea, and perhaps a dreary idea of the ſort of houſe.—The farmer, and his family, inhabit the northern end of it, which was once the ſervants apartments, kitchen, and

* Idyllium of Moſchus on the death of Bion.

† Les fleurs, Idylle par Madame des-Houlieres.

buttery

buttery—The rooms, however, which I have taken, are not ſo forlorn, as from the general air of the houſe you would ſuppoſe—I have a parlour wainſcotted and carpetted—The chimney, indeed, is very large, but, at this time of the year, is

"With flowers and fennel gay,*"

And will I dare ſay, look very well with a blazing wood fire in it—Above, I have a very good bed-chamber for myſelf, and one, ſtill better, immediately adjoining, for my children; theſe are papered, and though not in a very modern ſtyle, perhaps, they are clean, and warm—I have deſired ſome great, old, family pictures, with which both theſe and the parlour were disfigured, might be removed, and I ſhall ſupply the places of theſe heroes, who bled in the civil wars, (as I gueſs, by their wigs and their armour) and the dames, whoſe ſimpering charms rewarded their proweſs, but whoſe very names are now forgotten, (ſad leſſon to human vanity!) with rude brackets of wood, on which I ſhall put flowers, and between them ſhelves for the books I have brought with me—Theſe little arrangements ſerve to occupy my mind; and I forget the conveniencies and luxuries of which I am deprived, in contriving how I may ſtill obtain thoſe few, which (perhaps, from ſingularity of taſte) are more neceſſary to my content, than the ſideboard of plate, the elegant furniture, and handſome carriages, I have parted with.

I think more of their late thoughtleſs owner, poor Verney! yet why do I ſpeak of him in a tone of pity, when he is, probably, much hap-

* Gold ſmith.

pier

pier than I am?—I have had no other letter from him since our hasty parting in London, than that, wherein he very briefly assented to my proposed retirement; and said, though not in direct terms, that if I did not embarrass him about money, I was at liberty to do with myself and my children whatever I thought good—I will not comment on this—I will endeavour not to think of it—I turn always with painful pleasures, to *some other* subjects; but to *one* I think with pleasure only. I am happy to hear Mr. Bethel is at Bath, that you have such long and pleasant conversations with him, and that his charming girl is so much with you—He is a man whom I have always regarded and esteemed for his own sake, as well as because he was so excellent a guardian, and is so warm a friend to Mr. Desmond.—You hear that Desmond is at St. Germains, that place is, I suppose, the residence of Madame de Boisbelle, when she is not with her brother.—But Mr. Bethel tells you that Desmond is quite restored to health, and only occasionally wears his arm in a sling—may he soon lose even that recollection of his painful adventure!—I must now, my Fanny, bid you adieu! my letter is very long, yet I have written it all while my little William has been sleeping, and my other charmers walking with their maid in the shade of one of the woods, which a rustic bridge thrown across the river, puts within our reach—It is now near their hour of dinner, and I see them from my window crossing the meadow; I go to meet them, and help to bring them home, as I see, by his actions, that George complains of being tired, and solicits his Peggy to carry him as well as his

his ſiſter. I will ſeal my letter on my return, as it cannot go to the poſt till to-morrow.

May 29th, Nine at Night.

I did not imagine, my Fanny, in leaving my letter unſealed this morning, that I ſhould have to add to its contents, the hiſtory of a circumſtance that has ſurpriſed me a good deal.

On my meeting my children in the field below the houſe, their maid told me, that Maſter George had tired himſelf ſo by playing with a gentleman whom they had met, and with a great dog he had with him, that ſhe could hardly get him home. I enquired who the gentleman was; and heard, that they had ſeen him reading in the wood, and that the dog, which was a large water-ſpaniel, having ran towards the children, and ſomewhat alarmed the little girl, his maſter, who was, as Peggy deſcribed him, "one of the moſt handſome gentlemen ſhe ever ſet eyes upon," had come up to them, and aſked very eagerly, whoſe children they were; and hearing that their names were Verney, he had taken them both up and kiſſed them—That the little boy looked earneſtly at him, and then returned his fondneſs; and that once, in playing with him, the gentleman, called him George, as if he had known him before—I deſired the maid to deſcribe the figure of this gentleman, that I might know if it were any of my acquaintance—She ſaid, "that he was a tall, and, (according to her phraſe) quite a *grand looking man*, though not *luſty*, but rather *thinniſh*; he had dark eyes, brighter than any diamonds, and brown hair; but that he looked a little pale, as if he was ſick; and though he ſeemed

ſeemed in his way ſomehow like an officer, that he was left-handed."—Till now, I had formed, I own, a vague, and yet a very uneaſy idea, that this ſtranger, who knew the name of my little boy ſo well, might be Colonel Scarſdale; but this deſcription did not at all anſwer his perſon; and then I recollected, that if it had been him, George would have known him, and indeed the maid alſo, who has been ſo lately accuſtomed to ſee him every day—I then ſuppoſed it might be ſome of the neighbouring gentlemen, and bade Peggy deſcribe him to the farmer's wife and ſervants, which ſhe has juſt done, and tells me that there is no ſuch perſon in this country that they know of, and that the neareſt gentleman's ſeat is above ſeven miles off—I have again been queſtioning Peggy, as this ſtranger's having ſo much noticed the children, has made a great impreſſion on my mind—She ſays, ſhe is ſure, from his manner, that it is ſome gentleman who had been acquainted in the family, becauſe he ſeemed ſo fond of them, and "ſomehow glad to ſee them," and that he aſked George if he often walked in that wood, and whether his mama ever walked there?—"And to be ſure, Ma'am," remarks Peggy, "it muſt be ſomebody that knows you, or how ſhould he enquire after the children's mama, for I never told him whether they had a mama or a papa, or who belonging to them."

The more queſtions I aſk, the more I wiſh to know who this is, and whether it is really any man whom I have formerly known who happens accidentally to be in this country?—If it is, he will, probably, ſince he knows where I am, call upon me; and if it is not, of what importance is the circumſtance at all?—Thus I have endeavoured to reaſon myſelf out of the reſtleſs

curiosity that has disturbed me, perhaps, foolishly enough the whole of the remaining day—It is now night—a calm, a lovely night, without a moon indeed, but with the canopy of heaven illuminated with countless miriads of "planetary fires"—Such a night, my Fanny, as some of those in which we used, during the first year of my marriage, to be induced by Desmond to wander in the coppice-walks and shrubberies, that surrounded the Lawn at Linwell—Alone, as I am here, I must not venture so far from the house; but I may traverse the grass-plat before it, and listen to the nightingales, of which numbers salute me every evening with their song from the opposite woods; their delicious notes, softened and prolonged by the echos from the bridge and the water; one only one, seems to have taken up his lonely abode in the garden here—Alas! I could be romantic enough to fancy it the spirit of some solitary and deserted being like myself, that comes sympathetically to hear and soothe my sorrows.

Let me tell them then to this visionary visitant, rather than to my Fanny; and now, in wishing her a good night, wish too, that her slumbers may bring to her mind, without disturbing it, the image of, her

GERALDINE.

LET-

LETTER III.

TO MISS WAVERLY.

6th June, 1791.

THE opportunities I have of ſending to the poſt are ſo few, my dear ſiſter, that though I write whenever I have any thing to ſay, which I imagine you wiſh to hear, or whenever it relieves my heavy heart, to pour out its ſorrows to you, yet I know my letters do not reach you regularly, and I have, from the ſame cauſe, the mortification of waiting ſome days for your's, after they arrive at the poſt-office of the neighbouring town.

You may, perhaps, be anxious to know if I have again heard of the ſtranger, whoſe notice of my children ſeemed ſo extraordinary, and I own, for the following day or two, gave me ſome uneaſineſs—He was probably, however, only a traveller of taſte, invited by the beauty of this part of the country at this ſeaſon, to make an abode of a day or two at ſome little neighbouring public-houſe, or cottage, a circumſtance which, my landlord here, tells me, is not unfre-

quent

quent—It was, perhaps, the loveliness of my little ones that attracted his attention, and not any previous acquaintance with their family; and for the familiarity with which he seemed to treat them, much of it possibly in the mere fancy of Peggy, who, though a very good girl, is as likely as any other, to add to a story she tells from a natural love of the marvellous.—I say thus much about this adventure, least what I told you in my last letter should raise any uneasy ideas in your mind; for I know you have a hundred fancies about Colonel Scarsdale, and suppose that he is a sort of modern Lovelace; but, believe me, my Fanny, that character does not exist now; there is no modern man of fashion, who would take a hundredth part of the trouble that Richardson makes Lovelace take, to obtain Helen herself, if she were to return to earth—And Scarsdale is a man so devoted to the acquisition of fame in his own style of life, that with *my* change of fortune, *his* pursuit ends—It would have added something to the glories he already boasts in the annals of gallantry, if he could have carried off Verney's wife from her husband, her children, and her fame; but now that she is banished from the circles where she was talked of and followed—now, that she is forgotten by the idle flutterers who surrounded her for a few months; she is too humble, and too inconsiderable, to be any object to such a man, and is, she thanks heaven, sheltered by her obscurity from his insolent pretensions.

I have little more to say to-day, but that my precious William is better, and my appre-

henſions about him ſubſide again—I impatiently wait to hear how my brother's love affair proceeds, though, in my laſt letter, I omitted to mention his name, engaged, as I was, by the multiplicity of trifles; but this is not owing to any indifference about him—I love my brother, and ſhould rejoice in his being happily married, though he ſeems to have forgotten that he has a ſiſter, whoſe comfortleſs deſtiny ſhould, at leaſt, ſecure to her the common civilities of life from her own family, if they cannot ſpare her any ſhare of their affections—Alas! how eaſily do common minds make to themſelves excuſes for forſaking and forgetting the unhappy—Were I again to appear (which heaven forbid) in thoſe ſocieties, whoſe members now think me ſunk below them—what inſulting pity!—what contemptuous condolences I ſhould receive!—In proportion as I was once thought the object of envy, ſhould I now be that of ill concealed triumph, and malignant ſcorn, under the ſemblance of ſympathy and concern—When theſe thoughts ariſe, you cannot imagine how well pleaſed I am that I am here—

———" Are not theſe woods
More free from peril than the envious court?*"

And, as I hide myſelf in them, I regret nothing but your company, my ſiſter, and yet, I ought not to wiſh you with me, when you are where the young and happy ought to be, amid that world which has, at your age, and with your unblighted proſpects, ſo many charms,

* Shakeſpeare.

Farewell.

Farewell, for the preſent—it is a delicious evening, and I will now venture to walk out and enjoy it—How forcibly every ſuch ſcene brings to my mind our morning walks, our evening rambles in Kent, and the pleaſant little trios we uſed to make with Mr. Deſmond, who has ſo much taſte, and ſo much genuine enthuſiaſm—I wonder whether he is as much gratified by the charms of Spring at St. Germains, as he uſed to be in England? I ſhould rather fear not; at leaſt, that he is leſs likely there to find companions who underſtand him and can participate his pleaſure; for the French ladies in general have, I believe, very little notion of that ſpecies of delight, that ariſes from contemplating the ſimple beauties of nature—A few days will ſoon make it a twelvemonth ſince I ſaw Deſmond, and of that time, he has ſacrificed more than half to his diſintereſted friendſhip to my brother—But I have repeated this ſo often to myſelf, that, perhaps, I have as often obtruded it upon your recollection.

I have found in the oppoſite woods one of the moſt ſingular, and moſt beautiful ſpots that I ever ſaw—It is a little hill, or rather three or four hills that ſeem piled together, though the inequality of their forms is concealed and adorned by the variety of trees with which they are covered; many of theſe are ever-greens, ſuch as holly and yew; and juſt where their ſhade is the darkeſt, they ſuddenly recede, and from a ſtoney excavation, burſts forth a ſtrong and rapid ſtream of pure and brilliant water, which pours directly down the precipice, and is loſt in the trees

that crowd over it——A few paces higher up from a bare projection of rock, darts forth another current equally limpid, and having made itself a little bason, which it fills, it hastens over the rugged stones, that are thus worn by its course, and dashing down the hill for some time in a different direction, meets the former stream; united they make a considerable brook, and hasten to join the Wye; not, however, till two or three other little wandering currents, that arise still nearer the summit of this rocky eminence, which seems to abound in springs, have found their way to the same course—Of these unexpected gushes of water, you hear the murmurs often without seeing from whence they arise; so thickly is the wood interwoven over the whole surface of the wild hill; a narrow, and hardly visible path, however, winds around it, quite to its summit, which is less clothed than the rest, and where, on two roots, that the hand of time, rather than the art of man, has twisted into a sort of grotesque, rustic chair, I sit——and listening to the soothing sounds of the water, as it either steals or rushes beneath——I can see through the boughs great part of the farm-house I inhabit, and nearer, the grey smoke of cottages without the wood, curling among the mingled foilage ——It is, my dear sister, in this sequestered nook, that I am going to wander, and to think of you as the most pleasing contemplation, in which I can indulge myself; oncemore, then, a good night.

Gracious heaven!—Am I in the delirium of one of those feverish visions, which, with undescrib-

undeſcribable ſenſations of pain, pleaſure and wonder, reconcile, for a moment, impoſſibilities, or am I really awake?—I have ſeen him.—Deſmond, whom I believed to be in France!—Whom I had not the leaſt idea of meeting in this remote country! whom I even doubted, whether I ſhould ever ſee again! That I might ſay, how truly ſenſible I was of the debt of gratitude I owed him!—But I will try to recollect myſelf enough to relate, inſtead of exclaiming!——Yeſterday evening, I had finiſhed as I believed, my letter to you, and had ſeen my children put to bed—It was not yet eight o'clock, and the ſun, though ſunk beneath the oppoſite hills, tinged the whole landſcape with that roſy light, which it is impoſſible to deſcribe—I did not take a book with me, as I uſually do, when I walk alone, becauſe it was ſo late, that I meant, inſtead of ſauntering, as I love to do, to take my walk and return; however, when I reached the wood, I was tempted, by the perfect tranquillity of every thing around me—the fragrant ſcents that floated in the air—the ſoothing ſong of innumerable birds, and the low murmurs of the water, to gratify myſelf with a view of my favourite little hill, which I had never yet ſeen in an evening—I reached the top; when ſtretched on the ground, his head reſting on his arm, (from which a book ſeemed to have fallen) as it hung over the branch of the rude chair I before deſcribed to you, I ſaw a gentleman who appeared to be ſleeping—I had no idea of his face, for his hat and his hair concealed it, nor did I ſtay to ſee if I recollected his figure, but concluding that this was the

ſame

fame perfon who had been met by the children, I was returning very haftily from an impulfe that had more of fear in it than his general appearance ought to have raifed; when his dog which lay by him, ran forward towards me at the fame moment, the gentleman raifed his head—I faw Defmond leap from the ground, and, though in as much confufion as I was, he inftantly approached me—"Mrs. Verney!" was all he faid, and even to that I had nothing, for a moment, to reply—till he added—"I am afraid I have alarmed you"—"you have indeed," anfwered I—"for to meet any one here, was very unexpected—to meet you!"—I did not know what I would fay—but he feemed now to have recovered himfelf, and finifhed the fentence for me—"was more unexpected ftill?"—"It was, indeed, for I thought you were in France."

He gave no anfwer to this, nor did he account for his being in a part of the country, where I don't remember to have heard he had any acquaintance or connexions, but fimply begging of me to forgive the momentary alarm he had involuntarily been the occafion of, he faid, fince I *have* had, however unexpectedly, the happinefs of meeting you, Madam, will you allow me to have the honour of attending you to your home?"—I hefitated—I know not why, and then faid, "certainly"—We began flowly to defcend the winding and fteep path, which is croffed by roots, and interrupted by pieces of rocks—It was now, from the lateneis of the hour, alfo obfcure; and he, of courfe, offered me his arm, which I accepted indeed, but

but not with that eafy confidence I uſed to have in our early rambles, three years ago—It was now, that I firſt obſerved a black crape round his neck, in which he flung his right arm, while he aſſiſted me to deſcend with his left—I ſhuddered, but I could make no remark on that circumſtance—He ſeemed no more diſpoſed to converſe than I was, and we were ſilent till we reached the orchard, ſurrounding a cottage, through which the path leads, by a ſtile through the meadows and over the bridge—He ſeemed to know the way, as if he had been long accuſtomed to it—I then diſengaged my arm and he went firſt, but, in reaching the other ſide of the ſtile, my foot ſlipped, and I ſhould have fallen, but Deſmond, who had advanced three or four ſteps, flew back and caught me——He trembled ſo, that it was impoſſible to help remarking it—I feared, that, in endeavouring to ſave me, he had hurt his arm; and I almoſt involuntarily, expreſſed my apprehenſions—He aſſured me he had not received the ſlighteſt injury, and again offered me his left arm, on which I again leant, and with very little converſation, and that little conſiſting of broken and incoherent ſentences, we, at length reached the houſe.

There were candles in my little parlour; and the table was prepared for my ſimple ſupper; I aſked him, of courſe, to partake of it; he replied, in a low voice, that he ſeldom ſupped at all, but could not refuſe to ſit down—Peggy came into wait, and he placed himſelf oppoſite to me.

It

It was then, and not till then, my Fanny that I obſerved the extraordinary alteration in the countenance of Deſmond; he has loſt all that look of health and vivacity which we uſed to remark——pale, thin, almoſt to emaciation; his eyes ſtill radient indeed, but expreſſing dejection; or if they for a moment, aſſumed any other look, it was that of anxiety —He ſpoke ſometimes very low, at others, with that ſort of quickneſs, which is obſervable, when people wiſh to end embaraſſing converſation——And when I mentioned his wanderings, or his friends in France, (which I at length collected courage to do) he gave me ſlight anſwers, and changed the converſation as ſoon as poſſible.

As this evaſion of every topic that led him to ſpeak of his foreign connexions, was every moment more ſtriking, the cauſe of it, at length, occurred to me——I truſt I am not ſuſpicious, or inquiſitive; and certainly am neither deſirous of prying into the actions of my friends, nor diſpoſed to blame thoſe of Deſmond, to whom I owe ſo much; but I have now no doubt, that this reſerve ariſes from his having been accompained to England by Madame de Boiſbelle; and having taken, in this neighbourhood, ſome reſidence for her, on account of its being ſo retired——If this is the caſe, he was probably hurt and diſtreſſed in meeting here, one of his acquaintance; and it accounts at once for his manner, which though I cannot well deſcribe it, appears very extraordinary.

This idea no ſooner ſtruck me, than I felt hurt at the pain I thus unintentionally had given

given him, and particularly at having asked him, as I had done some minutes before, and merely for something to say, how long he proposed staying in this part of England? an enquiry which he answered after some hesitation, by saying, it was uncertain.

As I now dreaded that every question, however apparently inconsequential, might lead him to suppose me impertinently curious, we both sat silent, and I believe, he was meditating how to put an end to an interview, which was, perhaps, at once tedious and distressing to him; yet, I observed, when I dared observe his countenance, that he looked at me with eyes full of concern and pity, which I impute to the goodness of his nature—He felt sorry to see me in a situation so different from that which I was placed in, when our acquaintance began——An acquaintance, that I cannot endure to think, has been productive to him only of personal and mental uneasiness.

At length, after an hour and a half, the only time of my life that I ever passed in Desmond's company unpleasantly, he arose to go, and with a solemnity that yet had more dejection than formality in it; he said he must wish me a good night—I was on the point of asking him a very natural question, "If he had far to go home?" But I checked myself, and did not encrease, by any question, the embarrassment he seemed to be under, when, hesitating and faltering, he said, "May I be permitted, Madam, to pay my respects to you once more before I ——May I be allowed the honor of waiting

on you once again?"—I had surely no pretence to refuse this——He knows I am never engaged; and he knows that I am, or ought to be, more obliged to him than to any other human being—I could not, assuredly, therefore decline or evade, what I, however, wished he had not asked; as I not only see him so changed, as he is, both in appearance and in spirits, with concern: but fear, from his deportment, that the attention which he, perhaps, thinks himself under the necessity of shewing me, may put him into difficulties with the lady to whom he has attached himself—I have other uneasy sensations about it; but, however, I could only say, in answer to the permission he requested, that I should always be glad of Mr. Desmond's company, whenever he would so far honor me—He sighed, and thanked me; but added, "I shall not, Madam, intrude much on your indulgence, for in a very few days"—he hesitated again, and I could not help repeating, "in a few days? Do you leave the neighbourhood in a few days?"—"I believe so," said he——"Yes! I believe I *must* go within a few days; will you then suffer me to call to-morrow? and may I be gratified with a sight of your children?—I said, yes," and then, without naming the hour at which he would call, he left me.

Thus, my Fanny, ended this very extraordinary interview, for extraordinary it certainly is.——I know not from whence Mr. Desmond last came, or whether he is going——I know not where he has taken up his present abode——I could not, however forbear marking from my window the way he took when he left

left me; and, as long as I could discern his figure through the obscurity of the night, he seemed to return through the fields, and over the bridge, the same road as he came with me—I left the window—(from whence, I hope, there was nothing wrong in my thus observing him) I left it, only to retire to my pillow and my tears; which flowed more than usual this evening, yet I know not why; unless they suddenly meeting an acquaintance, a friend, who has certainly a great claim to my gratitude and good wishes, had more than usually fatigued my spirits, for, as to the rest, why should I be thus agitated by a circumstance in which I have no immediate interest?—Whether Mr. Desmond be travelling through this country alone, or whether he is retired hither with any companion, what have I to do with it? or why should I think of him farther than ever to follow him with my grateful wishes?

It is now eleven o'clock—I have left my bed since a quarter past five, for to sleep was impossible; ever since the hour when *I thought* it probable Mr. Desmond (who knows I am an early riser) might come—I have been expecting him, but, perhaps, he has changed his mind, or his friend may have engaged him.—It is market-day at the neighbouring town, and I have an opportunity of sending this letter, or rather this enormous packet, to the post, by my honest farmer, who has just sent in to say he is going—I therefore seal it, and will endeavour to reason away this ridiculous flutter, which the idea of a visitor gives me, (probably, because I have been of late so little used to company) and sit quietly down to finish a view I am doing for you,

you, of the prospect from my windows; in the progress of which, hitherto, I have, contrary to my usual custom, pleased myself.

Farewell, my dear sister—perhaps my commissioner may, on his return from town, bring me what would now be the most soothing and consoling to my spirits, a letter from my Fanny!

GERALDINE VERNEY.

LETTER IV

TO MR. BETHEL.

From Bridge-foot, a ſmall Cluſter of Cottages, in Herefordſhire, June 8th, 1791.

WHEN a man knows, my dear Bethel, that he is acting like a fool, the moſt uſual way is to keep it to himſelf, and to endeavour to perſuade the world that he is actually performing the part of a wiſe man; but I, who am, as you have often ſaid, a ſtrange, eccentrick being, and not much like any other, amgoing to do juſt the reverſe of this, and to acknowledge my folly without even trying at palliation; nay, I accuſe myſelf of having the *appearance* of ſomething much worſe than folly, which is in gratitude to you; but, as this is in appearance only, it is the former accuſation alone to which I ſhall plead; and much eloquence will be neceſſary to ſupply the defect of *reaſon*, which I know you will think my conduct betrays, when you ſee my letter dated from ſuch a place, and are told that it is within half a mile of the reſidence of Geraldine—Have patience, however, till I can relate the cauſe of all this, and, though I was neither bred to the bar, where, for money, our learned in the laws undertake

"To make the worſer ſeem the better reaſon.*"

Nor am *naturally* endowed with the faculty of doing ſo, I ſhall, at leaſt, be able, I think,

* Milton.

to

to convince you, that no motive injurious either to my friendſhip towards you, or my more tender affection for Geraldine, has led me to viſit her in a way that may be called clandeſtine, or to conceal from you my journey and my intentions; though, to ſay the truth, I did not mean to inform you of it till I ſaw you, nor ſhould I have done ſo, but for the accidental circumſtances of having firſt met her lovely children, and then her lovely ſelf.—

How then, you aſk, "were you concealed in her immediate neighbourhood, without any intention of either?—Incredible folly!"—— Such, however, *were* my intentions—I allow, if you pleaſe, all the folly, but, I inſiſt upon it, that there was no ſort of harm in ſuch a gratification as I propoſed to myſelf, by which myſelf only (if romatic attachment can hurt a man) was alone likely to be hurt; and, for which, therefore, I ſhould hold myſelf accountable to no one, my dear friend; not even to *you*, if I did not feel that your ſincere and generous attachment to me, deſerves all that confidence which I can repoſe in you, in matters that relate only to *myſelf*.—Your laſt letter deſcribing the total ruin of Verney, and the diſperſion of his family, completed the meaſure of that uneaſineſs I had long ſuſtained on account of Geraldine—It was in vain I endeavoured to reaſon myſelf out of it—I find, that ſeven-and-twenty is not the age of reaſon, or, at leaſt, where the heart is ſo deeply concerned—There were a hundred cauſes why I had rather have gone at the moment I ſet out, to Nova-Scotia, or even to Nova-Zembla, than to England—But

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the idea of Geraldine deſerted in diſtreſs!—Of Geraldine in poverty and ſorrow! obliterated every other conſideration in the world; and within four-and-twenty hours after the receipt of your laſt letter, which found me at St. Germains, I ſet out poſt, without taking even Warham with me, or ſaying whither I was going; and in ſix-and-thirty hours afterwards was at Dover, from whence I made my way, as quickly as I could, to the poſt-town in Herefordſhire, near which I had learned, (it matters not by what means) that Geraldine had, with her children, fixed her humble abode.

I told the people at the inn where I put up, that, being in an ill ſtate of health, (an aſſertion, to the truth of which, my figure and countenance bears ſome teſtimony) I was directed by my phyſicians to travel; and had been adviſed to bend my way towards Wales, ſtaying ſome little time at any place where the face of the country appeared agreeable, or the air ſalubrious—I added, that I ſhould ſtay, perhaps, a week or ten days in this neighbourhood; but as it was not for their intereſt to find out a private lodging for me, I applied, for that purpoſe, to the hairdreſſer, who profeſſed, over his ſhop window, to "dreſs ladies and gentlemen in the very neweſt London faſhion."

This very intelligent perſonage informed me, that what I wanted was, at preſent, ſomewhat hard to be met with; for that "the pleaſanteſt and almoſt only lodging *near* that town, which was, however, about ſix miles off, or rather better, was lately taken, by a lady and her children, for a year certain"—I affected to be ſtruck with the deſcription the

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gave of the pleasantness of the situation on the banks of the Wye; and asked, if he thought any cottage in the neighbourhood of the house he described, could afford me a bed-chamber? I cared not how humble and plain, if it were merely clean; saying farther, that, as health was my pursuit, money was no object to me; and that, therefore, I would give any person, who could find such an accommodation for me, a handsome present for their trouble; and would hire the apartment for a month certain, though I possibly might not remain in it a week.

My honest barber, whose zeal for my service was now completely awakened, set forth immediately to see what could be done for me; and, in the afternoon, returned to say, that, in a very clean cottage, he had found a decent bed-chamber, which I instantly set off, on foot, to see—walking not much like an invalid. I found the humble thatched cottage was one among a group of five or six, which are situated among orchards, at the foot of that range of woody hills, which are immediately opposite the farm-house inhabited by Geraldine—There was no ceiling to the room but the thatch and rafters, and no curtains to the bed, yet the chamber was clean, and I determined to take immediate possession of it—I therefore ratified my bargain to the great delight of the old man and his wife, who alone inhabited the cottage; and having satisfied my conductor, even beyond his expectation, I engaged him to return to the town for my baggage, and to attend me every day with a

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lad from the inn, from whence I am supplied with provisions.

I then retired to my lowly couch, and slept better than I have done since the receipt of your letter, in the certainty that, by the rising sun of the next morning, I should see the house where the loveliest and most injured woman on the earth hides her undeserved misfortunes.

You will believe me, my friend, when I protest to you, that this satisfaction, and that of witnessing her real situation, (which I hoped to do, without her knowing I was near her) were the only gratifications I proposed to myself; for many days I enjoyed it, and was content; nor did I voluntarily seek any other satisfaction.

"There are," says St. Preux, in those enchanting letters of the incomparable Rousseau, "but two divisions of the world, that where Julie is, and that where she is not"—I forget the French, and I have not the book here—To the force of the sentiment, however, I bear witness—*To me* the world is divided into only two parts; or rather, to me, it is all a blank where Geraldine is not—Yet, my friend, is this declaration no contradiction to what I often, and particularly, of late, asserted, that I have *now* (if indeed I ever was weak enough to indulge it) not the remotest hope of her ever rewarding an attachment, with which, as I know it is wrong, I wish not that she should *even be acquainted*—But, if you have ever truly loved, can you, Bethel, blame me for indulging that delicious, and surely that blameless sensation, which is derived from watching

watching over the peace and safety of a beloved object, from whom we do not even hope a return? While I could open my eyes in a morning and see the sun's first beams enlighten the opposite heath, and fall on the roof of Geraldine's habitation, making its high clusters of heavy, antique chimneys, visible, among the firs and elms that surround it—I used to say to myself, "*there she is!*—There, she will soon awaken to fulfil her maternal duties; to cultivate, to strengthen, or adorn, the purest of minds, by some useful or elegant occupation.—She is, if not happy, at least tranquil; and now and then, perhaps, bestows a thought, and a kind wish, on her friend Desmond."

Indeed, Bethel, with this satisfaction, (romantic, and even ridiculous as it would, I know, be thought by those who could not understand the nature of my affection for Geraldine) I should have been perfectly content, and having for a little while indulged myself in it, I should have sought you at Bath, have made you a confession of my folly, and then, after having given a few days to friendship, have again gone back to France; for England is not my country, when I can hear only, in whatever company I go into, of Geraldine's unhappiness, and the folly, extravagancies, and utter ruin of her husband.

This was my project; I lingered however, from day to day, finding happiness, I could not easily determine to relinquish, in catching, now and then, at a window, which I fancied to be that of the room where she slept, the distant view of a figure, which I persuaded myself

ſelf was her's—The window was only partly ſeen; the tall elms, which grow round a ſort of court, immediately before the houſe, hid it half, and though, when the ſetting ſun played on the caſement, I could more diſtinctly ſee it; I found, that if I would really ſatisfy myſelf with the certain view of Geraldine, I muſt ſeek ſome ſpot, where from its elevation, I could, by means of a ſmall pocket teleſcope, have an uninterrupted view of theſe windows.

I confined myſelf, however, to the houſe all day—you know I never am weary of ſolitude, nor am ever deſtitute of employment; theſe days, therefore, appeared neither tedious nor unpleaſant, ſince, at their cloſe, I was to be engaged in ſeeking for the means of ſatisfying my wiſhes; and ſince I could, as they paſſed, look out of my low and narrow caſements towards the habitation of Geraldine, and whiſper to myſelf—"*She is there.*"

At length, in the woods that ſkirt the feet of theſe hills, which would, about London, be accounted inacceſſible mountains, I found a little, ſhady knoll, to which the guſh of innumerable ſtreams of water attracted me—I aſcended by the almoſt perpendicular path, which ſeems to have been traced only by boys in their excurſions after birds, or by the ſheep that ſometimes feed here; and reaching the top, I had the ſatisfaction to find, that though it was ſurrounded on all ſides by trees, ſo as to form the moſt perfect concealment, they were low towards the top; and that a little rocky crag, that hung over the twiſted roots of an old thorn and a blighted daſh, afforded

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me a view of many of the windows of Geraldine's reſidence; at a greater diſtance, indeed, than from my cottage, but much leſs obſcured by the intervening objects——Here, then, I reſolved to paſs ſome part of all the few days that I had determined to ſtay here.

Four days ſince, I was returning, about one o'clock, from this my morning occupation, when the heat of the morning, and the freſhneſs of the graſs in that part of the wood, through which I was paſſing, induced me to throw myſelf on the ground, and continue the peruſal of a book I had with me, on which I was extremely intent, when I heard the prattle of children, but as I had often ſeen ſuch little ruſtic wanderers in the woods, I heeded not the circumſtance; till ſuddenly, Flora running forward, I heard an infant ſcream at her approach—I raiſed my eyes and ſaw a maid-ſervant with the two elder children of Geraldine!—I ſtarted up to prevent the little girl's being more alarmed by the dog, and as I wiſhed not to betray myſelf, I enquired the name of the children, yet, in a way ſo confuſed, that, I believe, the ſervant thought my manner very ſtrange—I ſuppoſed it impoſſible, after an abſence of twelve months, that George could recollect me, but he certainly did, though my name was no longer familiar to him; for, after looking at me earneſtly a moment, he returned my embraces, and even hung round my neck—What delight! to preſs to my heart this lovely little fellow, ſo dear to me on account of his mother—I was ſo charmed with him, and with the eagerneſs he ſhewed to continue with me, that

that I am afraid, I more than once forgot my precaution; however, the children, at length, left me. I imagined the servant would conclude, that it was some person of the neighbourhood, and would think no more about it —I continued my usual rambles therefore in the woods, but not at those hours when it was probable I should again meet them.

Convinced that Geraldine was less uncomfortable in her new situation than my fears had led me to suppose; having been now above a week in the neighbourhood, and fearing my remaining there much longer might raise some suspicions, that I would not for millions of worlds excite—I began to think of quitting it, and had once or twice determined to stay only *one* day longer; yet when the day of departure came, put it off till the next —But, on Thursday, I resorted to the spot, where I usually passed the evening; the weather was uncommonly lovely—I had, during the preceding, day, taken my walk, at an hour when I fancied Gerandile was at her dinner, round her garden, and was effectually concealed by a thick hedge of cut evergreens; but I was happy enough to be mistaken, as to her hour of dining—She came out with her children— I saw her within ten paces of me—She spoke cheerfully—I heard once more that enchanting voice—I dared hardly breathe, lest she should be alarmed; but, as soon as I could escape unperceived, I crossed among the high furze and hollow ways of the common, and returned home by a road remote from that which led from her residence to my cottage.

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The delicious impreſſion, however, which the ſight of Geraldine had left on my mind, the uncommon beauty of the evening, united to that of the ſcene, contributed to ſoothe my mind——I ſat down, and began to read; but every thing that took my thoughts from her was inſipid—I let my book fall, and fell into a *reſverie*——But I own, my dear friend, that the pleaſing dreams in which I was indulging myſelf were interrupted by the recollection of your frequent remonſtrances, and particularly by that queſtion which you have ſo often repeated——"What I meant by all this?"——My heart, however, could anſwer without heſitation, that I meant no injury to any human being—Nor, unworthy and undeſerving as Verney is, would I wiſh to rob him of the affections of his wife, admitting it poſſible he could poſſeſs them ——Thus far my conſcience clearly acquitted me; (would to heaven it could do ſo in every other circumſtance of my life) and I had ſettled it with myſelf, that while I avoided giving any ſuch evidence of my attachment to her, as might tend to caſt a reflection on the fair and unimpeached fame of the lovely woman for whom I felt it; I might yield to its influence with impunity——I know you will declare againſt any ſuch inference; but I had convinced myſelf I was right, and lamented that I had ever left England, under the idea of curing myſelf of a paſſion, which conſtituted the charm of my exiſtence; ſince by doing ſo, I have without loſing whatever uneaſineſs may occaſionly embitter that attachment created for myſelf others, which will not ſoon be diſſipated.—In theſe ſort of

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contemplations, I had ſome time been loſt, when ſuddenly my dog rouſed me——I looked up, and ſaw Geraldine herſelf, who, having perceived me, was haſtily retreating from the ſight of a ſtranger in a place ſo remote.

Could I, Bethel, then avoid ſpeaking to her?——It was impoſſible—I flew forwards to meet her——I apologized for the alarm I had occaſioned her——I entreated leave to attend her home, though, when ſhe accepted my aſſiſtance to conduct her down the declivity on the ſummit of which we met, I trembled ſo, that I could with difficulty ſupport myſelf——She ſeemed amazed at meeting me; but after ſome time recovered herſelf, and aſked, in the way of converſation, ſeveral of thoſe queſtions, which, from any other perſon, or in any other ſituation, would have been indifferent; but I could not anſwer them with the eaſe ſhe put them; and I am ſure I behaved like an ideot, for on a ſudden, ſhe grew cold, and reſerved, and, I fancied wiſhed me away, though I could not collect courage enough to go—At length conſcious of the fooliſh figure I made, ſitting ſilently oppoſite to her, and afraid of entering into any converſation leſt it ſhould lead to topics I could not determine to ſpeak upon, I collected reſolution enough to wiſh her a good night, and aſk leave to ſee her again to-day——This ſhe granted in the ſame diſtant way that ſhe would have granted it to a common acquaintance, and I left her, half frantic, to think that I am perfectly indifferent to her, though, three hours before, I was declaring

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to myself that I harboured not a wish to be otherwise.

It is now near eleven o'clock—I find I have an opportunity of sending this to the post—I dispatch it therefore and hasten to take one look, one last look, for such, indeed, I mean it should be; and if I can gain courage to talk to her as to a sister, who can feel for, and pity my errors and my weakness, I think, that whatever I suffer in tearing myself from her, I shall yet, after I have once got over the pangs of an interview, which may be the last I shall enjoy for years, be more easy than I have been for many months.——Adieu, dear Bethel——I feel as anxious as if the fate of my whole life depended on the next three hours; but perhaps it does.

Your's faithfully,

LIONEL DESMOND.

P. S. I shall not, certainly, stay here above a day longer—I think not—As after I have taken leave of her, upon what pretence can I linger in the neighbourhood? yet, as I have not determined, whether I shall reach you at Bath, by the cross-country road, or go first to London, and for a day or two into Kent; in short, as I have not determined what I shall do; and, probably, shall fluctuate *à la* Waverly, till the hour of my-setting forth—You may as well direct hither; because I shall leave orders at the post-house, whither my letters are to be forwarded. Who said, that sorrow had anticipated the injury of time; and that

that the beautiful and once admired Geraldine had loſt all her perſonal attractions?—To me, ſhe appears a thouſand times lovelier than ever; and was it merely her form and face, to which my heart yields homage, it would be more than ever her captive.

LETTER V.

TO MISS WAVERLY.

June 9th, 1791.

I HAVE seen Mr. Desmond again, my Fanny; and if he had before a claim to my regard, it is now heightened into as much esteem as I can feel for any human being—Yes! he is unhappy; and it is to me, as to a sister and a friend, he communicates his unhappiness—Ah! what would I not do to relieve from its solicitude, that noble and ingenuous heart, which places such confidence in me?—But, of this, enough—I only say thus much, to vindicate him from my unjust and improper suspicions, of having come here clandestinely, on account of the foreign lady, of whom we heard so many idle reports.——Desmond is alone; and quits this neighbourhood to-day.——He talks of visiting his friend, Bethel, who is at Bath; and soon afterwads, of returning to France——If he goes to Bath you will see him; but I, perhaps, shall see him no more for some years———As those years, with me, are, probably, to pass in this remote solitude; where, it would be violating the common rules, which the world expects us to observe, were I to receive his visits, how innocent and brotherly soever, they would assuredly be.

While I yet write, he crosses the bridge on horseback, and George, who is astonishingly fond of him, has run out, with his maid, to meet him——Desmond gets off; he puts the dear little boy on his horse; and, with one arm round

round him, he makes Peggy lead the horse forward——I hear the laugh of infantine delight even hither———There is nothing, Fanny, in my opinion, so graceful, so enchanting, in a young man, as this tenderness towards children——It becomes every man, but none more than Desmond; who is never so amiable in my eyes, as when he is playing with George—And my little girl, she now lisps out his name; and though she has seen him only twice, is a candidate for a seat on his knee; and turns towards him, those sweet blue eyes, without that pensive look that her delicate countenance generally expresses; as if she knew, even in babyhood, her fate to be marked with sorrow—But my noisy boy, and his friend, are at the door. I hear Desmond say, he is come to bid him goodby; and the child enquires, why he goes, and when he will come again.——I must go to wish him a good journey, and deliver him from the little, wild interrogatories of his playfellow.

He is gone! and I feel ridiculously low—I say, ridiculously, though, I trust, I do not give way to an improper sentiment—But why should it be wrong to admire and esteem an excellent and amiable man, from whom I have received more than brotherly kindness?—Why, indeed, should I question the propriety of this regard, because I am married?—Does that prevent our seeing and loving excellence wherever found?—and why should it?—To disguise these sentiments, would be to acknowledge them to be criminal—I rather glory in avowing them, because I am conscious they are just, pure, and honourable.—Why, in-

deed, ſhould I hide or apologize, for the tears I even now, ſhed, when I think that I may never ſee Deſmond again?—What a treaſure is a friend, ſo diſintereſted, ſo noble-minded, as he is? And why ſhould I not regret him?—How ſoothing, to a ſick heart in ſolitude and ſadneſs, is the voice of kindneſs, adminiſtering the conſolations of reaſon and good ſenſe, dignified with all the graces of a poliſhed mind—Such have I heard from Deſmond, in our laſt conferrence; and can I help regretting, that I ſhall hear them no more?

But it is not to you, my Fanny, I ought to excuſe myſelf, (if, indeed, it could be neceſſary at all,) for my regard; nay, I will call it my affection, for our admirable friend—Nor, though I feel his departure as a privation, juſt at this moment, can I lament having ſeen him.—I find that there is a poſſibility that I may be of uſe to one of his friends, in ſome diſagreeable circumſtance; and with what delight ſhall I embrace an opportunity of being uſeful to any of his acquaintance or connexions.—Farewell, my dear ſiſter—I am unable to write a long letter to day—I will go to my books, and to my walk in the wood; for thoſe are reſources that, I find, ſoothe me to tranquillity; while the complaints of George, that Mr. Deſmond is gone, and that he ſhall not ride any more, and his little innocent queſtions, when he will come again? and if he is gone to ſee pappa? quite overcome my ſpirits. I will write a longer letter in a day or two, though I ſhall have now very little to ſay.

June

June 10th, six in the Evening.

What is to become of me now?—An expreſs from the neighbouring poſt-town, accompanied by a French ſervant, has juſt delivered me the encloſed letter from Mr. Verney — I encloſe it; for I have not ſtrength or time to copy it—Oh! Fanny, what ſhall I—ought I to do? In truth, I know not!—How unfortunate, that Deſmond is gone; and that I cannot have the benefit of his advice.—Gracious heaven! What does fate intend to do with this miſerable, perſecuted being?

LET-

LETTER VI*.

Paris, May 22, 1791.

MY DEAR,

MY very worthy friends, Monſieur le Duc de Romagnecourt, and Monſieur le Chevalier de Boiſbelle, are, this day, ſetting off for England on a journey, relative to the affairs of the King of France, their maſter —They are returning to Paris directly; and having heard me expreſs a wiſh to ſee you here, have undertaken to eſcort you over; and the Duke himſelf attends you with this — I deſire, therefore, that you will ſet off with him, as ſoon as you conveniently can —As to the children, I think, travelling with them will be inconvenient to you; and ſhould ſuppoſe your mother would take them for the time you are abroad; or, perhaps, you might leave them very ſafe in the care of their ſervants. —You will do as you like about bringing ſervants for yourſelf; but, I think, you will find Engliſh women only encumbrances, and may hire French maid ſervants here; as to men, as we ſhall live altogether at the Duc de Romagnecourt's, his *ſuite* of ſervants will be ours. I ſhall expect the pleaſure of your arrival with impatience, where all things are going on well for the ſuppreſſion of the preſent vile proceedings.

I am, my dear,

Your's, affectionately,

RICHARD VERNEY.

* Enclofed in the foregoing.

I repeat

I repeat my queſtion, my ſiſter——What ought I to do?—Good heaven! what an inconſiderate man is Mr. Verney; and, I am ſorry to add, how unfeeling!—Leave my children!—Accompany ſtrangers to Paris!—The former I will not do; and ſurely I ought not to do the latter; but on ſomething I muſt determine; for, I underſtand, from the French ſervant, to whom I have been ſpeaking, that this Duke is actually waiting at the inn, at the neighbouring town, and expects to be aſked hither—What wildneſs—what madneſs, in Mr. Verney, to propoſe ſuch a ſcheme!——Whither can I turn me?—Oh! would to heaven Deſmond was not gone!—Write to me inſtantly—Yet how ſhall I put off my determination till I receive your anſwer?—How evade going?—For ſurely I ought not to go.—I believe it will be beſt to write a letter of excuſe to this French nobleman; ſaying, how impoſſible it is for me to undertake a journey ſo ſuddenly.—Surely Mr. Verney cannot mean——But I will not diſtract myſelf with uſeleſs conjectures, with ſuppoſitions more tormenting than the miſerable realities. I ſend this to the town, on purpoſe to have it reach you by the earlieſt poſt; but I tremble ſo, that I fear it is hardly legible. The Chevalier de Boiſbelle has not, I find, taken the trouble to come down hither with his noble friend. Surely he cannot be gone in ſearch—But, again, I am bewildered and diſtracted.——Pity, and inſtantly relieve your very unhappy,

GERALDINE.

LET-

LETTER VII.

TO MR. BETHEL.

Roſs, June 11, 1791.

BY this time, my friend, you expect me at Bath; and there I ſhould certainly have been on Monday next, if I had not been, by a moſt ſingular and unexpected accident, ſtopped here.

I took leave of Geraldine yeſterday morning—I left her ſituated in a place, where if ſhe enjoyed not that affluence and proſperity to which ſhe has been accuſtomed, ſhe was, I thought, tranquil and content.—She bade me adieu with the tendereſt friendſhip, yet with that guarded expreſſion of it that her ſituation demanded. I bleſſed her for the generous kindneſs ſhe ſhewed me; I reſpected the reſerve her circumſtances made it proper for her to adopt.—I thought by her eyes—and were there ever eyes more expreſſive? that ſhe was ſorry to ſee me depart, yet knew that it was proper I ſhould go.—Such ſenſations, in a more violent degree, I alſo felt—To tear myſelf from her was now more difficult than I ever yet found it; but I knew it would be injurious to her to ſtay; and never yet did my propenſity to ſelf-indulgence conquer my ſenſe of what I owed to the diſintereſted tenderneſs I bear her.

It was neceſſary then to go—and I dared not tell her how cruelly I felt the neceſſity; I affected ſome degree of cheerfulneſs; I played

ed with her lovely boy, and tried to diſguiſe, though I believe ineffectually, the contending ſenſations with which I was agitated——at length I left her. As I looked back, I beheld her at the window as long as ſhe could ſee me, for the little fellow would not be content to quit it while I was in ſight; and ſhe held him in her arms.—At length the deſcent of the bridge hid her from my view.—I then haſtened on to this place, which is about ten miles from her habitation, for hither I had directed my portmanteau-trunk to be ſent from my cottage; and here an horſe, I had purchaſed ſome days before waited for me—As I found it eaſier and pleaſanter to have an horſe of my own, now that I am able to ride, than to go in a poſt-chaiſe or by any other conveyance.—I was then giving ſome directions about the forwarding my trunk, and was juſt going to mount my new purchaſe in the yard of the inn; when a berlin, apparently belonging to a foreigner of diſtinction, attended by three French or Swiſs ſervants, drove to the door—an appearance, which though about the affairs of others I have not much curioſity, I own excited it ſtrongly.—I ſtopped therefore, and ſaw alighting from the carriage, a man about three or four-and-forty; he ſeemed to be a perſon of rank; but he wore, with ſome ſtrong ſymptoms of his own conſequence, that bewildered look which I have often obſerved in travellers who are unacquainted with the language and manners of the people they are among.—He ſpoke French to the landlord and the waiter, who not having the leaſt idea of what he ſaid, were as much diſtreſſed as he

was; a perſon, however, ſoon after made his appearance, who ſeemed to be a ſort of travelling companion, and who undertook to be his interpreter; but ſo miſerably did he execute this office, that the honeſt Welchman and his people, were more puzzled by his incomprehenſible Engliſh, than they had before been by the French of his ſuperior.——The ſhewy equipage, and the number of attendants, however, raiſed ſo much reſpect in the breaſts of the landlord and his houſehold, that they were extremely deſirous of accommodating their great cuſtomers, if they could but find out what they wiſhed for.

The firſt idea that occurs to an Engliſhman, on ſuch an occaſion, is a good ſubſtantial dinner; this, therefore, by ſuch ſigns as he thought moſt likely to elucidate his meaning, the maſter of the inn propoſed; and as there is a language in all countries by which eating or loving may be expreſſed, this was at length aſſented to. The gentleman attendant, or as the landlord called him, t'other Monſieur, was ſhewn into the larder; which, though it was not quite ſo well furniſhed as that of the Bear at Bath, or ſome others of equal fame, yet appeared very ſatisfactory; and a certain number of diſhes were ordered to be prepared, to the ſatisfaction of both parties.

As there was ſomething exceſſively comique in the diſtreſs of the landlord and his wife, who could get no more intelligence from the ſtrange ſervants than from their maſter, I could not forbear ſtaying a little to be amuſed with it. I had nothing to do better, and was indifferent whether I ſat out before dinner or afterwards, on my ſolitary journey: but I had

yet

yet another motive for ſtaying than to witneſs this odd ſcene; I thought I might be of ſome uſe to theſe foreigners, by explaining to the people what they really wanted, or what houſe they came in ſearch of; for they enquired for ſome place or perſon in the neighbourhood, about whom or which, the people could comprehend nothing.

The landlord, however, ſeemed fully perſuaded, that after ſo good a dinner as had been ordered, matters muſt clear up; infinite, therefore, was the buſtling and fuſſing to have this ready.—The weather was hot; and the landlord, with his wig half off, a good round, plump Welch head, a fiery red waiſtcoat, and his pompadour Sunday coat, exerted his broad ſquat figure to the utmoſt; while his wife put on her beſt plated cap with pink ribands; a fine flouriſhed ſhawl; and a pea-green flounced ſtuffed petticoat, under a flowered cotton gown, drawn up; and, notwithſtanding this elegance (all to do honour to the Britiſh females before outlandiſh gentlemen,) ſhe was as anxiouſly ſuperintending the roaſting and boiling, as if ſhe was providing in her common array for the ordinary of a market day, on which the cuſtom of her houſe depended.

At length the dinner was ready, and the landlord marched in with it; but he had not remained long in the room before he left it, and came puſſing into that where I ſat, in redoubled conſternation.—"Oh lord, Sir," ſaid he, "do you underſtand French?—Lord, Sir, if I ben't quite, as one may ſay, at a nonpluſh; not one ſyllable more can I make out from that there gentleman that fancies how he talk

talk Engliſh, than that he is come to fetch away ſome lady, that he calls Madam ſomething, and will have it that ſhe's here.—Lord, Sir, I'm quite floundered for my ſhare, and knows no more what he'd be at, than my little Nan there in the cradle.—I wiſh for my ſhare, folks would ſpeak Engliſh; for why?—ſuch lingo as theſe foreigners uſe is of no ſervice in the world, and only confounds people, ready to drive them crazy—Then they gabble ſo plaguy faſt, that there's no catching a word by the way, even to gueſs a little by what they would be at.—Sir, if your honour has a ſmattering of their tongue, and would not think it too great a condeſcenſion, ſeeing they are Frenchmen, to make yourſelf known to them, 'twould be doing me a great ſervice, if ſo be you'd juſt give me an item of their intentions—for my wife ſhe's teizing me like a crazy woman, to know if they want beds made up, and if they do, whether their beds are to be made like as ours are?—I ſays to her, why how the murrain now Jenn, ſhould I know, but I'll go aſk yon gentleman, perhaps he can let us in to the right of the thing, which to be ſure I ſhould be glad of; for, Sir, they ſay that one of theſe is a duke."—To ſtop this harangue, which ſeemed not otherwiſe to be near its concluſion, I aſſured my landlord that I knew a little of their tongue; and if he would order one of their ſervants to me, I would ſend them in a meſſage, expreſſive of my wiſh to be of uſe to them if in my power.

In conſequence of this, their anſwer informed me, that the Duc de Romagnecourt was much honoured and flattered by my attention, and requeſted

requeſted the happineſs of ſeeing me.—Judge, dear Bethel, of the aſtoniſhment, the mixture of wonder, indignation and confuſion, with which I learned that Mr. Verney is become the intimate friend of this Duc de Romagnecourt; that it is with him he reſides at Paris; and, that it is under his eſcort he has ſent for Geraldine to join him there.

If I had heard that I was, at one blow, reduced from affluence, to depend on the bounty of upſtart greatneſs—dependence which of all other ſpecies is moſt hideous to my imagination; if I had been told that I had no longer a friend in the world; nay, that Bethel himſelf had forſaken me, I think I ſhould not have felt a ſenſation of greater anguiſh and amazement.—Monſieur D'Auberval enquired of me if I knew Madame Verney; though I ſaw by the Duke's manner, that *he* was the perſon intereſted. I knew not what to anſwer; and my embarraſſment muſt have been viſible, if they had not imputed part of it, to my natural *diffidence* as an Engliſhman; and (as they thought) an Engliſhman of inferior rank; for they ſaw I had no ſervants with me, and ſeemed to wonder how a perſon who travelled in his own country without a *ſuite*, ſhould be ſo perfectly verſed in the language of their's.—I now, however, underſtood the purpoſes of their journey; and under pretence of making ſome enquiries, I withdrew to conſider of what I ought to do.

To interfere between Geraldine and her huſband (I cannot write his name with patience) was, at leaſt, improper. To give her notice that I was ſtill near her, was impertinent; and making myſelf ridiculouſly of conſequence, in an affair

affair where my protection was not, perhaps, requisite.—This Duc de Romagnecourt, tho' he had the air of a veteren *debauché*; and though his conversation, little as I heard of it, confirmed the idea his appearance impressed—*might* be a married man; a man of respectability and honour; at least he was one to whom it was evident Mr. Verney chose to entrust his wife; and what right had I to interfere? How could I indeed do so, without its being known that I had been privately residing in her immediate neighbourhood; and encouraging a belief, that I had some fancied authority, to exert that influence which only a brother or some very near relation, is supposed to have a right to exert.—The more I considered the man, this Duc de Romagnecourt, his behaviour, his conversation; the more improper, nay, impossible it seemed for Geraldine to set out with him on such a journey; yet I did not see how I could, with propriety, save her from it by my direct interference. I therefore determined to give the Duc de Romagnecourt the direction he requested me to procure for him; to trust to the first reception of such a proposal to the sense and prudence of Geraldine, and to await where I was the event of the letter which, by a servant of his own, he sent to her from her husband.—It contained, as the Duke informed me, an injunction to set off immediately with him for Paris.—I affected merely to know there was such a lady as Madame Verney in the neighbourhood; and, having now made up my mind, I returned to these worthy friends of Verney's; gave them the address they desired, and saw the French valet set out accompanied

panied by a guide from the inn.—It is impoſſible to deſcribe to you what I felt while theſe men were abſent; nor the effort with which I ſupported the converſation that the Duc de Romagnecourt invited me to engage in.—However, I commanded myſelf as much as poſſible, as it was abſolutely neceſſary to prevent any ſuſpicion of my being particularly intereſted for Mrs. Verney; and I wiſhed to lead him to ſpeak of her, which he perhaps would not have done with ſo little reſerve, if he had ſuſpected that I was acquainted with her.

It is not very difficult, after having ſeen a good deal of this beſt of all poſſible worlds, to enter into much of a man's character, even from a firſt interview.—I ſoon learned that the Duc de Romagnecourt, was a man of very high faſhion, and very great fortune in France; that he was very much confided in by the court, and of courſe extremely averſe to the claims of the people; that he execrated the ſtruggle they had ſo ſucceſsfully made for their liberties, and now viſited England with a view to engage in favour of an oppoſite ſyſtem, which he ſaid, would ſoon have *le deſſus** again;) thoſe, among us whoſe intereſt it was moſt effectually to cruſh every attempt at reform.—He hinted that in his way through London, he had ſucceeded in this negociation beyond his hopes; and that he was to have a farther confirmation of the ſupport that had been promiſed him on his return, which he propoſed immediately, *avec la charmante femme*, whom he expected to conduct.

* The upper hand.

Proud,

Proud, profligate, and perfidious, accuſtomed to entertain high ideas of ſelf-importance; and ſeldom finding any of his inclinations reſiſted becauſe he had power and money to purchaſe their indulgence, the Duc de Romagnecourt was but little diſpoſed to conceal his principles or his views.---I learned that when he was in England ſome few months ſince, he ſaw and admired Geraldine, to whom he had then been introduced by her huſband.—I underſtood that Verney was under very great pecuniary obligations to this man, who now actually ſupports him in France; and the inference I drew from the knowledge I thus obtained of the character of the one, and the neceſſities of the other, was too dreadful; I recoiled with abhorrence from its immediate impreſſion, but ſtill it returned with undiminiſhed anguiſh, and every word uttered by the Duc de Romagnecourt, ſerved only to confirm my apprehenſions, and encreaſe my uneaſineſs.

I determined that, whatever might be the conſequence, no conſideration upon earth ſhould induce me to quit the country, while this moſt illuſtrious perſonage remained in it; and having made that reſolution, I awaited, with as little viſible anxiety as poſſible, the return of the meſſengers who were ſent to Geraldine.

I had indeed very little occaſion for any other exertion, than that of patience; for the Duke, with all the forward conſequence of which we accuſe (and ſometimes juſtly accuſe) his countrymen, entered, nothing doubting my approbation, into a hiſtory of himſelf

himſelf—His rank, his fortune, his ſeats, were deſcribed—nor was he more guarded on the ſubjects of his politics, or his amours.

In regard to the firſt, he was, I found, a moſt inveterate enemy to the revolution—Deprecated the idea of any degree of freedom being allowed to the inferior ranks of men in any country; yet owned that he had with the duplicity that was adopted by many of his compatriots, appeared to yield to a torrent they could not reſiſt; but while they ſeemed to go with the ſtream, he hinted, that meaſures were taking effectually to turn its courſe; and he triumphed in the diſcomfiture of the reptiles, who had thus dared to aſpire to the privilege of freemen and ſaw, in his mind's eye, the leaders of this obnoxious *canaille* languiſhing out their miſerable lives in the moſt dreary dungeons of the new-erected Baſtile—Such was the colour of his politics. His love ever ſucceſsful, and without thorns, was, as he repreſented it, *toujours couleur de roſe*——He ſcrupled not to hint, in terms that could not be miſunderſtood, that he had been very highly favoured by ſome of the moſt exalted ladies of the French court; that he was an univerſal favourite; and that there was no woman in this country, or his own, who could long remain inſenſible of his powers of pleaſing, when he choſe to make a point of gaining their favours. In this ſtyle—— (and I liſtened to him with contempt that ſtifled my indignation,—he ran on for ſome time; till the wine he drank, much heavier than that he was uſually accuſtomed to, began

gan to have a very visible effect on him——His companion, a Monsieur d'Auberval, (though I understand another person came over with him) was even more inebriated than himself—And I learned, from what they together discoursed, that Verney had no intention of meeting his wife at Paris, but was going to Metz with some other French noblemen deeply embarked in the cause, whatever it is, that now engages their intriguing spirit; and that Mrs. Verney was, after some stay at a magnificent seat of the Duc de Romagnecourt's, about five leagues from Paris, to follow her husband to Metz —In short, dreadful as the confirmation of my fears was, I had no longer to doubt but that Geraldine was sold by the wretch who dares call her his wife.

Nothing but the reflection of what I owed to Geraldine, could have restrained me from expressing the indignation I felt—It was, however, necessary to dissemble——I am a wretched hypocrite; nor could I even in this emergency have succeeded, if my companions had been very accurate observers——At length after some hours of such tortures as I thought it hardly possible to feel and exist; the men, who had been sent to Geraldine with her husband's letter, returned, and brought to Monsieur de Romagnecourt a note written in French, of which this is the substance.

"Mrs. Verney presents her compliments to the Duc de Romagnecourt; and, as it is quite out of her power, on account of ill health, and from other circumstances,

to

to leave England immediately; and equally so, to quit her children, who must necessarily be very inconvenient companions to him; she must beg leave to decline the honor he intends her of a place in his carriage on his return to Paris; and the letter with which she takes the liberty of troubling him to Mr. Verney, will account to him for her delaying her journey.

"Mrs. Verney is sorry the small house and establishment she has here, makes it impossible for her to receive the Duc de Romagnecourt at her present residence; and obliges her to take this method of thanking him for the civility he intended her."

Bridge-foot Manor-farm,
June 11th, 1791.

Though the purport of this note was exactly what I expected from the presence of mind and good sense of Geraldine; and though I was relieved from my first anxious apprehensions, as to the terror she would be in on receiving it, I had yet but too many fears to contend with. I saw that Monsieur de Romagnecourt was mortified for the moment, but by no means so much discouraged as to desist from his pursuit; and after reading the note over twice or thrice, admiring the elegance of the writing, and the purity of the French, which, he said, was such, as not one in a thousand of his countrywomen could have produced, he fluttered about the room, though with somewhat less dignity than usual, for he could hardly stand; and then calling her a lovely prude, he determined to try, the next morning, what his own irresistible presence could do towards thawing the ice

of

of this cold Engliſh beauty; and, in this diſpoſition, I left him at one in the morning.

I ſaw that any attempt to diſuade him from ſuch a ſcheme, would be fruitleſs; and, indeed, I thought it beſt to let her poſitive and perſonal refuſalconvince him at once, that his preſumptuous and inſolent propoſal muſt be abortive—Still it was painful to me, to think that Geraldine muſt be inſulted by hearing it.—I knew, that elevated as her mind is, above thoſe frivolous and unworthy apprehenſions, to which women fancy it an amiable weakneſs to yield; yet, that ſuch an addreſs, from ſuch a man, in a place where ſhe was entirely unprotected; and the application coming from her huſband, could not but be altogether moſt diſtreſſing to her.—Though I could not ſave her from it, it was poſſible to ſoften the ſhock, by giving her notice of it; and aſſuring her, that there was within her reach, a man who would lay down his life, rather than ſee her expoſed to any unworthy treatment.

Sleep was with me entirely out of the queſtion.—At the earlieſt dawn of the morning, I was on horſeback, and directed my courſe to my former reſidence, the cottage.—My ancient hoſt and his wife were juſt making their homely breakfaſt, on brown bread and cyder, when I entered their kitchen; they were rejoiced, yet amazed, to ſee me; and I was compelled, once more, to have recourſe to ſtratagem, to conceal the real motive of my ſecond viſit.——I told them, I had found myſelf not ſo well after I left their houſe, and had, therefore, returned from Roſs, to abide with them a few days longer.

I then

I then considered in what way I should announce to Geraldine the visit she was to expect; and I concluded, that I would go to the house and send up my name—Slowly and pensively I began this short walk——I dreaded for her the uneasiness I was about to inflict—I dreaded for myself, that I should betray in a way too unequivocally expressive of my sentiments, all I felt.——To tell her that I apprehended her husband had consigned her to another, was to intimate to her a degree of infamy, almost too shocking to be imagined, and that of a man, with whom she was, perhaps, to pass her life, and who was the father of her children; yet, to let her, for a moment, think of obeying him, which, it was possible, she might do, if it struck her as being her duty, was still more dreadful; and I saw there was nothing to be hoped for, but from the rectitude of understanding, which I have always remarked in her; but I even dreaded the excess of those strict principles, which I have often known to impel her, contrary to her own wishes, and her own sense of propriety, to follow the dictates of those, who, conscious as she must be, of their mental inferiority, had, she thought, a right to her compliance.

As soon as I could distinctly discern the windows, I saw they were already open, though it was yet early—The morning was lovely; but my mind was too much occupied to suffer me to enjoy it. I knew Geraldine used to walk early in the little court that is before her apartments; but now there was no traces of her having been out; nor did I hear the voice of my little playfellow cheerfully greeting my return, as, I own, I had fondly anticipated—All seemed

ſeemed mournfully ſilent; yet I thought I heard ſome footſteps moving ſoftly about the houſe. I tapped at the old, thick, carved door with my ſtick; for there is no knocker—Nobody anſwered—I repeated it—Still no anſwer——At length, after waiting near a quarter of an hour at the door, I lifted up the iron latch, and opened it———I croſſed the brick hall, but ſaw nobody——The door of the parlour, where Geraldine uſually ſits, was a-jar; I puſhed it gently open, and was ſtruck with a groupe of figures, which exactly brought to my mind that which had been ſo forcibly and painfully impreſſed on it, by my dream at Hauteville.——

Geraldine was extended on an old faſhion cane ſopha, or what is, I think, called a ſettee, ſuported by cuſhions of green ſtuff, and with her right arm ſhe claſped the youngeſt of her children, who appeared to my terrified imagination to be dying, as its head repoſed on her boſom, while her tears fell ſlowly on the little pallid face; the girl, unconſcious of her mother's anguiſh, ſat upon the pillow behind her, playing with ſome flowers, and the eldeſt boy had ſeated himſelf by her in his own little chair, and was holding her left hand and looking mournfully at her, and his brother. Fixed to the ſpot by grief and amazement, I dared hardly breathe leſt I ſhould too ſudenly alarm her. Her eyes were ſhut, and I only ſaw by the tears that fell from them, that ſhe was not in a ſtate of inſenſibility, for my entrance did not ſeem to diſturb her—ſhe ſuppoſed it to be the maid.

In a moment, however, the little boy turned round and ſaw me, and ſcreaming my name in

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an accent of tranſport, as he eagerly ran towards me. Geraldine opened her eyes, and repeated, "Deſmond! gracious heaven! Deſmond!"

As ſoon as I could diſengage myſelf from the careſſes of the child I approached——— "I am deſtined" ſaid I, in faultering accents, "I am deſtined to diſturb and alarm you, can you forgive me for this intruſion?"—I heſitated—I hardly knew what I would ſay. She gave me however her hand as ſhe roſe; involuntarily I could have preſſed it, for the firſt time in my life, to my trembling lips, but I dared not; and I remained holding it ſtill in mine, while ſhe ſaid, after a pauſe of a moment—"Never was the ſight of a friend more truly welcome."

The cordiality of this reception, (for her eyes, heavy as they were, confirmed the purport of her words) reſtored me to ſome degree of confidence and compoſure. I took a chair, unbidden; ſhe begged I would forgive her for attending to her child, who was, ſhe apprehended, dangerouſly ill.—I enquired how long it had been ſo, and ſhe replied—

"I am grown ſo very weak, Mr. Deſmond, I mean, that I am ſo much diſpoſed to be what the fine ladies call nervous, that I am no longer fit for a nurſe; every fooliſh accident diſcompoſes me, and of courſe injures my nurſing—I have been extremely alarmed for the life of this ill-ſtarred baby, within theſe few hours, but I hope my fears have exaggerated the danger." I had no need to aſk what it was that had ſo much diſtreſſed her, yet I did not like abruptly to tell her, that

that I was already acquainted with it; she did not however, lead to it, and we remained for some moments silent, while little George clung about me, and said he loved me dearly for coming back.

"Ask Mr. Desmond, my love," said Geraldine, as if glad to have the means of thus questioning me.—"Ask him, why he came back when we were afraid he was quite gone.

"It was," answered I, "to prevent your being alarmed by the suddenness of a visit from another person, which will, even when you are prepared for it, be, I believe, disagreeable enough." She grew more pale at these words—"you mean the Duke de Romagnecourt?" "I answered, yes; and relating briefly what had passed, except that part of our conversation that raised my suspicions about her husband's having literally sold her, (with which it was impossible for me to overwhelm her) I asked what she would do to evade the importunities of a man, who seemed to suppose his wishes were not to be counteracted, and to believe he need only appear, to obtain them."

The dignity of conscious worth, thus deserted by its protector, gave spirit for a moment to her languid countenance. "If Mr. Verney," said she—but she checked herself, and hesitating a moment, said, with less vivacity—"if this nobleman gives himself the trouble to come hither, which, however, I most earnestly wish he may not, my answer will be very positive, and very short—I am extremely obliged to you for giving me notice

tice of his intentions; but if you could prevent his coming—"

It did not, at that moment, appear to her that *my* interference was liable to a thousand misconstructions ——but before she had finished the sentence, this occurred to her very forcibly; and she added——" but I beg your pardon for my inconsiderate folly——this cannot be ——he must come——I must undergo, unfit as I am, the irksome ceremony of seeing him and of giving him my positive refusal.'

" And if he should afterwards persist ?"

" Impossible—he surely cannot intend it."

I then gave her a specimen of his conversation, which I had, till now, mentioned only in general terms.——She was much affected at the idea, that the strange and unmanly conduct of Verney had exposed her to a scene so improper and so extraordinary——And I saw her turn her turn her eyes, expressive of the most acute maternal anguish, and filled with tears, on her children, particularly on the little one in her arms; but even in this moment she uttered no complaint against their cruel father, though I saw her bosom heave as bitter reflections on his conduct, swelled her heart almost to bursting.

Oh! Bethel! why could I not, at that moment, have taken this lovely, injured woman and her children openly under my protection? —Why could I not aver that ardent, yet sacred passion I feel for her?——Alas! instead of daring to own it, and to offer her my life, I was struggling, perhaps inefficaciously struggling, to make all I said, all I proposed, appear as the dictates of mere friendship;

and to perſuade her, that, from a mere friend, ſhe might, nay, ought to accept my counſel, if ſhe could not my offers of ſervice.———After a farther conference of half an hour, during which, I ſaid all that might, without too much alarming her, put her upon her guard againſt the Duc de Romagnecourt's projects—I was preparing to take my leave, when ſhe aſked me if I had breakfaſted—I never once recollected that I had not—— She ordered breakfaſt to be brought; and, I ſaw, made an effort to be cheerful, but it was evidently forced; her eyes anxiouſly followed the child, as the maid carried it out of the room—I remarked, that notwithſtanding the particular converſation in which we were engaged during breakfaſt, ſhe liſtened to every noiſe above ſtairs, and went out twice to enquire after it.—It was proper I ſhould go—for, I knew, I muſt be an inconvenient interruption to her; yet I had not ſaid all I wiſhed to ſay, and could not determine to depart.

On her return the laſt time into the room, ſhe ſmiled on me with angelic ſweetneſs, and aſked if I forgave her abrupt rudeneſs?—She then ſat down again—endeavoured once more to regain her compoſure; and enquired at what time I thought it probable ſhe might be oppreſſed by the honor that threatened her?—As ſhe thus again introduced the ſubject, I collected reſolution enough to tell her that my fears of her ſufferings did not end with this viſit———for that I thought the noble foreigner very likely to perſevere in his entreaties, and leave nothing unattempted to enforce them.——At the word *enforce*, on which I laid

I laid a ſtrong emphaſis, ſhe ſmiled, and aſked me if I thought he would really enact a French Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, and carry her to Paris without her own conſent?——I anſwered very gravely, that though that could hardly be done; yet, that ſhe might, and I was afraid, would find the Duke a viſitor of great perſeverance, and one who would not, without great difficulty, be diſſuaded to recede from a point which, he thought, he had her huſband's authority to perſiſt in.

She looked at me, as if to examine whether I meant more than I ſaid——I ſuppoſe I looked as if I did——But again ſhe endeavoured to laugh off the fears which ſhe would willingly believe groundleſs.——"I cannot imagine," ſaid ſhe, "why you have taken it into your head, that this man would give himſelf ſo much trouble------I dare ſay he will make a fine ſpeech or two, be *au deſeſpoir*, that he cannot have the happineſs of my company, and content himſelf with ſhrugging up his ſhoulders at my want of common ſenſe, in preferring this *pays triſte & morne*, with my children, to the delights of a journey to Paris with him."

"I wiſh," replied I, "it *may* end ſo, my dear Madam."

"But you doubt it?"

"I do indeed."——I then gave her ſome ſtronger reaſons, drawn from my obſervations of the preceding evening, *why* I doubted it ——"You are," ſaid I, "quite unprotected here; you have not even a man-ſervant who might ſhut your doors againſt impertinent intruſion."——She allowed this; and when I

asked her whether I had her permission to remain at the cottage, I had before inhabited, till I saw the event of this visit, a faint blush, which spoke a thousand grateful, yet fearful sensations, was visible on her cheek ——— But checking her fear, her pure and noble mind yielded only to gratitude, she gave me once more her lovely hand——" It is worthy of you," said she, with enchanting frankness, " to make so generous an offer, I accept it rather to quiet your apprehensions than my own; but it must be upon condition, that you run no risk of embroiling yourself with this extraordinary visitor of mine." ———I assured her I would not; and having obtained permission to wait on her for half an hour in the evening, I took my leave.

And now, my dear friend, I have written this volume since——— I have seen from my windows the carriage of Romagnecourt go to her house—— Impatiently I awaited its return, which was not for an hour and a half; and now I go to enquire the result; and as I shall send this immense packet away to day, and shall have no opportunity to write again for some time, I leave you to comment on the strange story I have related, and to blame, for so I doubt not but you will, (since chivalry is no more) this romantic knight-errantry

Of your faithful,

LIONEL DESMOND.

You see I conclude cheerfully, which I account for by telling you, that whenever I am

am to see Geraldine, I feel in heaven; and I hope to see her this evening restored to quiet, for her child was better when I left her; (indeed, I believe her tenderness greatly exaggerated his danger) and I hope the noble Duke has departed peaceably with his final answer; yet, till I am assured that she is completely relieved from his insolent importunities, my heart, I find, must be subject to frequent fits of anxieties and indignation.

LETTER VIII.

TO MR. BETHEL.

Bridge-foot, June 13 1791.

THOUGH there has not been time for you to anſwer my former letters, I am growing extremely impatient to hear from you; but till I do, though I fear you will blame all I have done, I muſt beguile the anxiety of the ſituation I am now in, by continuing my narrative.

I went on the evening of yeſterday, at the time Geraldine had appointed, to her houſe. ——So far from rejoicing in the final diſmiſſion of her importunate French viſitor, as I hoped to have found her, ſhe appeared extremely alarmed at his determined perſeverance; and under the greateſt apprehenſions of another viſit from him on the following morning.—She repeated with ſymptoms of great diſquiet, the converſation ſhe had held with him; and his eager remonſtrances, on her poſitively refuſing to accompany him; mingled with what he believed the moſt irreſiſtible adulation, left me no doubt as to his views; nor of the compact made with Verney, by which he aſſured himſelf he ſhould carry them into effect.—Though the whole of this odious tranſaction did not ſeem to have ſtruck Geraldine as it had done me, I ſee that ſhe ſuſpects but too much of it; and ſuch, indeed, was the language the Duc de Romagnecourt held, that of his deſigns the

ſhe could not be ignorant.——She evaded, however, repeating the extravagant ſpeeches which made them ſo evident, with modeſt dignity; but, as this was no time to conceal from her any part of my apprehenſions, I ventured to aſk her—whether ſhe could be blind to the real motive of this importunate interference; and, if it was not very viſible that the Duke's pretended friendſhip for Mr. Verney, was only a paſſion for her perſonal charms.—She owned that it appeared ſo; and then added, that during the time ſhe was under the cruel neceſſity of remaining in London, where the acquaintance begun, ſhe perceived that this foreigner had conſidered the ſums he loſt to Verney, as a ſort of paſſport to her favour; and had then addreſſed her in a ſtyle, which only the lighter manners of his country, and his total ignorance of her real character, could have induced her to tolerate a moment: but ſhe had believed, that on returning to France he had thought no more about her.

I could have told her, that the impreſſions ſhe made, even when thoſe impreſſions were only thoſe of her perſonal lovelineſs, were not eaſily eraſed; but I was in ſuch a ſtate of mind, that I dared hardly ſpeak at all, leſt I ſhould too evidently betray, what in her preſent ſituation would have been doubly improper.—Her diſtreſs diſtracted me; and I knew not how to relieve it but by a direct addreſs to the Duke, from whence I ſaw many ill conſequences, and ſhe others; to which *I* ſhould have been entirely indifferent ——I underſtood that this unfeeling ſuitor,

had

had dared not only to expreſs his contempt for all thoſe ties which ſhe held ſacred, but to ridicule Verney; judging, perhaps, that it was impoſſible ſhe could love him; and that her ſhewing ſhe deſpiſed him, (which was a ſentiment he thought ſhe could not conceal,) would be a very important point in his favour.——"It is now," ſaid ſhe, "it is now that I feel in all its bitterneſs, that humiliation to which the conduct of Mr. Verney has reduced me——This man dares thus addreſs me, becauſe I am fallen from the ſituation in which I once moved, and he ſuppoſes that my mind is humbled with my fortune."——She had hitherto reſtrained her tears, but they now fell on her boſom—Had ſo many drops of blood been drawn from my heart, I ſhould have felt them leſs painfully——Blame me not too ſeverely if the ſenſe of what Geraldine ſuffered (ſhe, at whoſe feet the world ſhould be proſtrate) my curſed ſituation which rendered my attempting to relieve her ſo hazardous to her fame—the dread of her continuing defenceleſs and unprotected as ſhe was, to be expoſed to propoſals ſo inſufferably inſolent; the effect which I ſaw this ſtate of uneaſineſs had on her health, and a thouſand other reflexions, crowding together into my mind, threw me off my guard.—By heaven, Bethel! I was in a momentary phrenzy—and forgetting that to avoid encreaſing her diſcomfort was the object neareſt my heart, I yielded to the violence of ſuch mingled and diſtracting emotions; and I believe, looked and behaved like a madman.

I was

I was almoſt immediately checked, however, by the effect this ſally of ungovernable paſſion had on Geraldine—She ſeemed at one thunderſtruck for a moment; then recovering her preſence of mind, ſhe put her hand gently on my arm; and, with a countenance where what ſhe felt for herſelf, was loſt in the expreſſion of ſolicitude for me; ſhe ſaid——"My good friend! what is the meaning of all this?—Do not ſuffer your concern for me to overcome you thus—Above all things, you *muſt* promiſe me that you do not perſonally appear in this affair------Give me your advice———I know it will be that of the kindeſt and moſt brotherly friendſhip, and I will follow it: but I muſt inſiſt upon your relinquiſhing every idea of ſpeaking to Monſieur de Romagnecourt——to any other propoſal you ſhall make, I ought to attend."——The manner in which this was uttered, reſtored me inſtantly to myſelf; I was aſhamed of the expreſſions of vengeance againſt Romagnecourt, and of rage at my own ſituation, that I had uſed.——I felt all their impropriety, and regretted that I had uttered them: yet the emotions which gave them birth were as ſtrong as ever; and, while I repented, I could not apologize for them—I remained ſilent, till Geraldine, in a voice yet more ſoothing, enquired, what I would adviſe her to do, ſince it was too certain that no common means of repreſſing, unwelcome importunity, had any effect on the arrogant perſeverance of Monſieur de Romagnecourt—For he had told her, that he ſhould remain at leaſt a week in the neighbourhood, in ex-

pectation, that she would change in his favour, a resolution so hastily adopted.

"Good God! exclaimed I, is it impossible to escape seeing this man? is it impossible to deny yourself? On what pretence does he exclaim a right to molest you?"——"On that," she replied, "of being sent by Mr. Verney."

"But has he no sense or propriety, none of the respect he owes you?

"Alas!" answered she, "it is, I think, too certain that I shall suffer much more persecution before I am released from him; but be that as it may, you may be assured, Desmond, that the idea of your personal danger, which could not fail to arise from any application to Mr. De Romagnecourt, is infinitely more terrifying to me, than any apprehensions I entertain for myself; and after all, why should I be thus uneasy at impertinence which cannot last many days; and which can only harass and fatigue my spirits, but not do me any material injury."

"And is it not then (Geraldine, I had nearly said) is it not a material injury, dear Madam, to be subjected for hours and days to hear such sort of conversation as that with which this man presumed to address you? and is not your deigning to admit a second and a third visit, giving him reason to hope you will finally be less inexorable than you declare yourself?—— Presuming as he is, a very little of what he will interpret as encouragement, will render his insolence insupportable.—— I own, that if I, who have not the happiness to be allied to you, and have certainly no right

right to influence you, ſhould interfere on this occaſion to deliver you from his importunity; (which, I believe, it would not be difficult to do) ſuch an interference might give occaſion to diſagreeable miſconſtructions; but ſurely it were better to hazard thoſe, which, perhaps, in this remote place, might not happen, than to leave you a day, an hour, expoſed to the intruſion of this aſſuming and arrogant foreigner——Would it be conſiſtent with the friendſhip, the eſteem, you are ſo good as to allow me to profeſs; and I hope I need not ſay how ſincerely I profeſs it) to leave you in a predicament, in which, were you my ſiſter, I could not bear that you ſhould remain a moment?"

I ſaw this argument had a viſible effect on Geraldine——but, ſhall I own, that at this moment my ſelfiſh heart bounded with delight at the idea that I was not indifferent to her; and regardleſs of the additional pain *ſhe* muſt feel from a preference againſt the indulgence of which her principles would revolt——I dared to taſte delight, which no conſideration had, for a moment, power to reſtrain.—She remained ſilent; and then ſaid with a deep ſigh——"I thank you moſt truly, Deſmond, for ſuppoſing me your ſiſter——Ah! would to God I were indeed ſo! Had I ſuch a brother, I could not be expoſed to a ſituation ſo cruel——I ſhould then have a protector! But as it is, (and her tears fell faſt) I am deſerted by all thoſe on whoſe guardianſhip I have a claim.——To your generous—your more than brotherly friendſhip, I am already but too much indebted——Were there not an infinite number

ber of objections, I could not bear to encreaſe this debt; but, as it is, the bare idea of any interview, on the ſubject of his viſits here, between you and Monſieur de Romagnecourt, is intolerably dreadful; and I entreat you never to name it again."

"Something, however muſt be done," ſaid I; "for unauthoriſed, as I am, to ſpeak to Monſieur de Romagnecourt, *I* can as little bear his inſults to you——inſults, from which it is the indiſpenſible duty of every man of honor and feeling to defend you."

"You terrify me to death!" anſwered ſhe ——"Promiſe me——I inſiſt upon your promiſe, that of ſuch a meaſure as applying to this French man yourſelf, you wil think no more."

"Promiſe me then," ſaid I, "that you will think of ſome way of avoiding his future viſits."

"I know of but one, and that——that is, at preſent, impracticable.

"Name it, however, for heaven's ſake."

"It is", ſaid ſhe, heſitating——"to go to Bath to my mother; but beſides other conſiderations, which render ſuch a journey, at preſent, almoſt impoſſible—I have reaſon to fear that I ſhould be at this time an unwelcome viſitor——My brother is, as Fanny's laſt letters tell me, on the point of being married into a family, whoſe favour, proſperity alone can conciliate.——For this deſired union my mother has long been labouring; and ſhould my preſence, depreſſed and humbled as I am, impede it——I know, too well, that I ſhould be a moſt unwelcome viſitor—Unwelcome to every one but my Fanny."

This

This cruel reflection conquered, for a moment, her equality of mind; deep sighs and tears choaked her. Oh! Bethel! to behold the woman I adore in such a state, without daring to relieve, or even to participate her sorrows! ——There is on earth no condition so painful.—— I internally curfed her deteftable relations; (of whom all but her fifter are fo unworthy of her) and, for a little time, was too much affected by her anguifh, to be able to fpeak.——At length, I faid—— "But is it not poffible for you to be in lodgings where you need not be under the neceffity of meeting this ridiculous Fairfax family—You may efcape from hence, for a time, to return again when your purfuer is baffled."

"A journey, with fuch a family, to Bath," faid fhe mournfully, "and lodgings, when I arrive there, are expences which my mother would affuredly murmur at. Perhaps you are not aware, that though it was found impracticable for me to give up my fettlement, as I moft willingly would have done; yet, that I have nothing during Mr. Verney's life, but a trifling allowance by way of pin-money, which *I* have never afked for, and *he* has never paid. Though he could not fell his eftate with my jointure fecured upon it, yet it is fequeftered——Colonel Scarfdale inhabits the houfe for a certain number of years; and the income is his——Verney has therefore, left himfelf deftitute, and thus improvident, on his own account—— Is it wonderful he fhould be fo on mine and his children?"

Oh!" thought I, "had he been *only* improvident—equally improvident, it were well!—

but

but for himſelf he thinks but too much; and you, Geraldine, are the deſtined ſacrifice!"

But this, though I thought it, I dared not ſay. I ſhall make my letter endleſs, if I relate all that afterwards paſt.—Alas! my friend! I found, that notwithſtanding the precaution with which you promiſed to ſupply her, by means of her ſiſter, ſhe had been of late ſo inadequately furniſhed with money, that ſhe had not enough to pay what muſt be paid for her apartments, were ſhe to quit them, and to anſwer the expences of her journey. At length, ſhe conſented to my ſupplying her with what was neceſſary for this purpoſe, to be repaid, as ſhe believes, by her mother; and the apartments, (having paid for the preſent half-year,) ſhe ſtill retains; and thus it is ſettled, that if ſhe cannot to-morrow diſmiſs this very improper and importunate viſitor, ſhe quits this place, and you will ſee her, my friend, at Bath. On my part, that no remarks may be made on our being in this retired ſpot, or travelling together, I ſhall ſee her only to a place of ſafety, probably as far as Glouceſter, and then go into Kent for a few days; after which, there will ſurely be no impropriety in my joining you at Bath, (as I have always intended to do) even though Geraldine *ſhould* be there.—She has promiſed to write to me———(I truſt there is no harm in that) I ſhall hear how long her ſtay is likely to be——If Waverly's marriage takes place, and all her own family look as cool upon her, as there is reaſon to fear they will, ſhe will, perhaps, haſten to bury herſelf again in her beloved ſolitude: at all events, *my* ſtay at

Bath

Bath muſt be ſhort, as ſome buſineſs, from which I cannot diſengage myſelf, will abſolutely require my preſence in France early in July; and then, perhaps, ſhall take leave of England *for ever*.

The breath of ſcandal has never yet injured the ſpotleſs character of Geraldine. You, who know, that my love for her has a juſt claim to be called *true* love, becauſe it ſeeks only her good———You, my friend, before you condemn me, will aſk yourſelf, whether *I* am likely to commit any indiſcretion that will really injure her fame?———You will not, after having ſo reflected, blame me for what has paſſed ſince I have been here———I could not act otherwiſe———And after all, who is to report my being here at all?———Thoſe foreigners do not know me even by name——— They do not know that I am acquainted with Geraldine———Her departure cannot be imputed to me; and though I foreſee that you will now find a hundred reaſons to condemn me—I value myſelf on having acted, as you would have acted had you been ſo ſituated.

Farewell, dear Bethel, till I meet you.—You will, perhaps, ſee the lovely ſubject of this letter almoſt as ſoon as you receive it. From you, and from her ſiſter, ſhe will hear the ſoothing voice of friendſhip and tenderneſs———And I recommend her to thoſe good offices from you, which, from her own family, I am afraid ſhe will not receive.

Ever your's, faithfully,

LIONEL DESMOND.

LET-

LETTER IX.

TO MISS WAVERLY.

Glouceſter, June 16th 1791.

I STAY here a day, my Fanny, to recruit my exhauſted ſpirits, after the variety of agitations I have been expoſed to. You have, by this time, received my two laſt letters; and know the ſtrange viſit that has driven me from my peacable abode; though I would have continued there in deſpite of importunities and impertinence, which could not have laſted long, if I had not dreaded Mr. Deſmond's interference, which ſeemed hourly probable; and which nothing but my determining to put myſelf under the protection of my family, could have long prevented.

My account of the ſecond and third viſits of the Duc de Romagnecourt*, would convince you that he was not eaſily to be repulſed; nor would Deſmond be perſuaded that I ought patiently to endure this tranſient evil———I ſaw conſequences attending *his* applying to Monſieur de Romagnecourt, of which I could not bear the idea without terror —Any meaſure, therefore, was to be adopted rather than hazard it; and yet I foreſee, that if even his preſent interference, and his friendly attention to me, be known, inferences may be drawn as falſe towards him, as unfavourable to me. Alas! my Fanny, the proſpect every

* In a letter which does not appear.

way

way around me is darkening; and in the ſtorms hat are on all ſides gathering, I ſhall probably periſh. Deſmond was ſo good as to inſiſt on accompanying me as far as this place on horſeback——He then immediately left me; and is gone into Kent. I am very ſure, my ſiſter, by your laſt letter*, that you blame me for the circumſtances that have occured ſince Mr. Deſmond's reſidence in the neighbourhood of my retirement; and I own that ſuch adventures befalling a married woman, ſeparated from her huſband, are very likely to raiſe, even in the moſt candid minds, ſuſpicions of her conduct.----You, however, ſurely know me too well to harbour them a moment; and if I were not bound by all the ties of honour and gratitude to ſecrecy, I could at once convince you, that no improper attachment to me, has been the cauſe of Mr. Deſmond's journey hither.———Still as it is impoſſible that this can at preſent be explained, I wiſh that as little may be ſaid of it as poſſible.

I know not how I find reſolution to proceed from day to day in this career of miſery.---My children, for whom I ought to live, alone ſupport me; nor have I in the world another motive to wiſh my exiſtence prolonged, unleſs it be your affection, my dear Fanny.———Do not therefore, now when I moſt want it, do not let it fail. You will receive this letter a few hours before my arrival——Let me find at the Bear at Bath, a note from you, to ſay where you have taken lodgings for me; when I ſhall ſee you, and when I may be permitted to pay my duty to my mother.———Surely,

* Which does not appear.

how-

however she may be occupied with the approaching festivities which are intended for the more beloved and more prosperous part of her family, she will not refuse some maternal kindness to her unfortunate child, whose unhappiness is not of her own creating———and who, though she returns poor and desolate, like the Prodigal in Scripture, has nothing wherewith to reproach herself; nor occasion to say, "Lo I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight."

Perhaps, my dear Fanny, your ill-starred Geraldine will not long trouble you.—"There certainly is such a distemper," says Fielding, "as a *broken heart*; though it is not mentioned in the bills of mortality".--Till that calamity robs mine of every sensation, it will be fondly attached to you.

GERALDINE VERNEY.

LET-

LETTER X.

TO MR. DESMOND.

Bath June 21, 1791.

I AM again undertaking to execute a very unpleaſant taſk———But my friendſhip for you Deſmond, is of a nature which withſtands even—what ſhall I call it? not unkindneſs, nor duplicity; for I believe, from my ſoul, you are incapable of either.———But that want of confidence which ought to ſubſiſt between us, and in which you certainly failed when you came to England, and went into Herefordſhire without informing me of your intentions.——The conſequences of this imprudence, for ſuch it ſurely was, have been more uneaſy to the object of your ſolicitude than you are aware of; but though I am ſtill vexed, and a little angry with you, becauſe I think you acted unlike yourſelf, it is impoſſible to ſee her, without feeling ſo much intereſted, that every other conſideration is abſorbed in axiety for her.——Geraldine is, indeed, an excuſe for every failure towards *me*; but when that failure has injured her, I cannot allow of the apology; and the taſk of chiding you for your indiſcretions, and relating their effects, falls on me moſt unwelcomely.

Early yeſterday, I received a hurried and confuſed note from Miſs Waverly, beſeeching me to ſee her, by ſome means or other, in the courſe of the morning.———I anſwered that I would be at a bookſeller's, where we ſometime have

have, you know, made these *assignations*, within an hour.——I was punctal to my appointment, and in a few moments after, Fanny arrived, wrapped in a large morning cap, and a cloak, tied round her neck, which were, however, insufficient, even with the deep veil that depended from her bonnet, to conceal that her eyes were swollen with weeping, and that her whole frame was in extreme agitation. She seemed unable to speak when she came in, but recovering herself, she asked if I would walk with her, as she had much to say to me. We took the shortest way to get out of town, and proceeded in profound silence, till we reached the fields.—She then put into my hands her sister's last letter, dated from Gloucester, and told me, that she had obeyed, as well as she dared, her directions, and had provided a lodging for her; but that her mother was extremely displeased with the journey, and had heard, by some means or other, for which it was very difficult to account, that Mr. Desmond ha been some time concealed in the neighbourhood of her residence at Bridgefoot, and was the person who had advised her to quit it for Bath, instead of complying with Mr. Verney's wishes, and going to France, with a nobleman of very high rank, a married man, a man of the very first fashion and consequence, under whose protection she might not only have travelled with utmost ease and elegance, but, since she was directed to do so, by her husband, with the greatest propriety.—" Such," said Miss Waverly, " is the representation that has been made to my mother, and which, added to her own dislike of Geraldine's coming hither at this time,

time, has irritated her so much against my sister, that she will hear nothing I can say in her excuse.—She has even forbidden me to see her; I shall not, however, obey her in that respect; but I dare not so directly violate my mother's cruel injunctions, as to meet her on her arrival—Yet how will her already, half broken heart, be wounded, when instead of a friendly reception from a sister, who fondly loves her, from a mother who ought to protect her, she finds, awaiting her arrival, a harsh letter from that mother, filled with remonstrances and complaints."

"She shall at least" said I, as soon I as could recover from the pain this intelligence gave me, "she shall at least find one friend ready to receive her; I will wait myself her coming, and soften as much as I can, the inhuman conduct of Mrs. Waverly; forgive me Miss Fanny, I think it most inhuman."

"I was about," answered she, "to solicit that friendly assistance which you now so generously offer—Without some such interference, the blow will quite overwhelm my unhappy sister.—By what means my mother has got such intelligence, I cannot imagine.—Her usual informer, one whose visits I always dreaded, is no longer here, and if she were, I cannot discover how Desmond's abode in England, which was a secret to his most intimate friends, should be known to her.—I own, Mr. Bethel, I wish he had forborne to visit the country, where Geraldine resides, with an air of secresy; for though she assures me, (and she is truth and candour itself, that in doing so, he was actuated by very different motives from those which my mother's informer has dared to impute to him; yet

yet assuredly, such a circumstance happening to a young and beautiful woman, apart from her husband, will receive, from the generality of the world, a very different interpretation."

It would be difficult to describe with the pen, the manner and voice in which Fanny Waverly uttered this—her countenance I could not see, for she turned from me, and had her handkerchief to her eyes—Her emotion was however extremely affecting; I did all I could to re-assure her, and promised, that I would see Geraldine composed and easy, before I left her, in her new lodgings, (where she was expected that afternoon,) and give early intelligence of her state of health and spirits to the anxious Fanny.

"Alas" said she, "it is all the comfort I shall have about her to day, for my mother has made an engagement with the Fairfax's, from which, I have in vain attempted to excuse myself————pardon me, Mr. Bethel——they are relations of yours, and are soon to become relations of mine, but I shall never love them, for I detest pride and selfishness wherever I meet them; above all, I detest them, when they are poorly concealed under the ill-managed affectation of refined sentiment, and superior information.

I could not forbear a smile at the little asperity, with which this sarcasm, (you will call it truth) was uttered; and soon after, as Fanny had made some excuse to her mother, which she feared, would be detected as an excuse, if she staid too long, we parted, and I prepared for the painful scene I was to go through in the afternoon; I thought it however

ever beſt, as I was known to be ſo much connected with you, not to wait her arrival at the inn; but to leave a note for her, entreating permiſſion to attend her, as early as ſhe could admit me.

About half paſt five o'clock, I received from her, the following card.

" Mrs. Verney is infinitely obliged to Mr. Bethel, for his early and moſt welcome attention; being unable from indiſpoſition, to remain at the Bear without great inconveniences, ſhe is already removed to her lodgings in Milſom-ſtreet, where ſhe expects, with impatience, the ſatisfaction of ſeeing Mr. Bethel."

I haſtened thither inſtantly; and was ſhewn into a ſmall dining-room, where I ſaw the two eldeſt of her lovely children playing on the carpet; the door of the adjoining room was a-jar, and I had hardly ſpoken to George, before Geraldine entered.

Such an expreſſion of deſpondence and woe was on her countenance, that I ſtarted as I ſaw her—She forced, however, a melancholy ſmile, as ſhe held out her hand to me; and ſaid, in a faultering voice, " This is kind indeed, and like my friend Mr. Bethel."

I endeavoured, in my turn, to ſpeak cheerfully; but it would not do—She waved her hand for me to take a chair, but ſeemed afraid of truſting her voice with another ſentence.—There was evidently ſuch a painful ſtruggle to conceal her agitation and check her tears, that to have ſeen her weep would have been leſs affecting. I expreſſed my fears, that ſhe was a good deal fatigued by her journey ——— She anſwered, " I am indeed; travelling with

three

three very young children, with only one servant, and in some uneasiness of mind, has been altogether a little too much for me—The sight of a friend like you, Mr. Bethel, is, however, reviving; and makes me as much amends as any thing can now make me, for the want of kindness I experience from my own family." This cruel reflection was insupportable—her voice failed her; and she drew her handkerchief from her pocket, to conceal the tears she could no longer restrain.

After yielding to them a moment, however, she endeavoured again to repress them; and said inarticulately, "I beg your pardon, for attempting to conceal any thing from you; and to distress you by the sight of sorrow that must appear extravagant——but read this letter from my mother—from my only parent——from her in compliance with whose wishes——" She could not go on—I took the letter from her hand, which I could willingly have pressed to my heart—I was too much agitated to read it very distinctly then; but I enclose it to you, for she gave me leave to put it in my pocket.

"You see, Mr. Bethel," said she, when she regained her voice—"You see, that the coldness of my family is not judged punishment enough; but that they accuse that most generous and noble-minded of men, your friend Desmond, of attachments——of views, which I am sure, he never entertained; and thus rob me of the only friend, except yourself, that my cruel destiny has left me---But I will submit to it in silence---I will not trouble my mother with the unwelcome sight of a daughter, whose misfortunes are her faults---I will go----

but

but yet I know not whither!———they will allow me, I hope, a short respite here till I can determine."

I need not, surely, say to you, that I said every thing I could imagine, to console this lovely, injured mourner———I told her that her sister had sent me, to assure her of *her* unfailing tenderness, and of her determination, that no injunctions from her mother, should prevent her seeing her the next day. I endeavoured to persuade her, that the ideas Mrs. Waverly had taken up about you, were owing to the forgeries of malice and malignity——— that she would soon be convinced of their falsehood———and that all would be well———She shook her head—— "Ah! never!" said she, "in this world for me—my destiny cannot be changed—it must, therefore, be supported--But, however, no state of mind, so cruelly painful as that I have endured since I received, two hours ago, my mother's letter can last long."

A silence of some moments ensued, for I had exhausted every proper topic of consolation. At length, she said---"Notwithstanding all this, I am so conscious of the rectitude of my own heart; and so perfectly convinced of Mr. Desmond's honor and integrity towards me, that I shall not affect to have any reserve about naming him; for to do so might intimate that I blushed at knowing how highly he honours me with his esteem, which I rather glory in. Have you heard from him, Mr. Bethel, since he has been in Kent? --Is he well?---And does he talk of returning soon to France?"---I replied, "that I was not, at present, informed of your intentions; but

ſhould, probably, ſoon ſee you at your own houſe; where, I imagined, you would ſtay, at leaſt, a month"---She ſighed---"We ſhall "loſe you then," ſaid ſhe to me; "that loſs "will be irreparable." I aſſured her, that, as long as my continuing at Bath would be of uſe to her, in the ſmalleſt degree, I would not ſuffer even my wiſh to ſee you, after ſo long an abſence, to have any weight with me. ---I could have added, that I knew I could not oblige you ſo much as in remaining where my preſence could contribute to her ſatisfaction.

She was not able to thank me; or, for ſome time, to ſpeak---Recovering herſelf, ſhe ſaid ---"you are too good, Mr. Bethel! ---The voice of kindneſs and ſympathy, overcomes me more than the cold and cruel reſerve of my family, becauſe I cannot help making continual compariſons!----My Fanny!--- ſhe too forſakes me!---yet I would not have her diſobey my mother, however I may languiſh to ſee her."

Again I aſſured her, her ſiſter would fly to her, at all hazards, the moment it was poſſible; and after ſome farther converſation, I had, at length, the pleaſure of leaving her much more compoſed than I had found her. ---She ſpoke, however, with extreme anxiety, about her youngeſt child, whoſe conſtitution is, ſhe fears, quite ruined by the uneaſineſs that has been preying upon her own, while ſhe has been nurſing him.

As to Geraldine herſelf, ſhe looks moſt beautiful---leſs dazzling than ſhe once was---ſhe is a thouſand times more intereſting than in the moſt luxuriant bloom of early beauty---I never

ſaw

ſaw a face that gave me ſo much pleaſure in the contemplation of it, as her's does; and yet I have ſeen many more regular----The reaſon of this, I believe, is, that there is ſo much ſenſe blended with ſo much ſweetneſs in every expreſſion of her countenance: ----I have often ſeen both ſeparately; but, in faces, where one predominates, there is frequently a want of the other--------Her form, too, is, in my opinion, the very perfection of feminine lovelineſs; yet it ſeems to owe all its charms to her mind -----the dignity of the one heightens every grace of the other. See! if your inexorable Mentor, as you have often called me, is not writing an eulogium on the very charms for which he condemns your adoration---But I am now too well convinced that nothing can diveſt you of your attachment; and the juſtice of my praiſes cannot encreaſe it---- All I ſhall henceforward attempt to do, will be to keep it within thoſe bounds of prudence, which you cannot paſs without doing the moſt fatal injury to its object----- Prudence in which, my friend, you moſt cruelly failed in your journey into Wales.

I own I am much diſturbed at the information Mrs. Waverly has obtained of the circumſtances of your abode in a place, where I thought it quite improbable that you could be known. I am ſtill more diſturbed at the conſtruction ſhe has been taught to put on your viſit.

I have juſt had a note from Miſs Waverly, ſhe will be with her ſiſter to-morrow morning at ſeven o'clock-----This evening,

her mother has taken care to render it impossible.

I will write again in a few days, till when and ever I remain,

My dear friend, your's faithfully,

E. BETHEL.

LETTER XI.

TO MRS. VERNEY.

Bath, Thurſday.

DAUGHTER VERNEY,

I HEAR, with great concern, and indeed amazement, of your intended arrival in this place. I wiſh you had acted more prudently, as well as properly; and am ſurpriſed, that in your ſituation, you ſhould think it right or becoming, to receive viſits from Mr. Deſmond, or any other perſon, not authoriſed by your family; and, at the ſame time, refuſe to comply with your huſband's requeſt, in going abroad, under the care of the nobleman, whom he had engaged to ſee you ſafe to him ——I am very much alarmed for the conſequences of all this; and, indeed, thoſe of my particular friends, whoſe judgment I rely on, have given me great reaſon to be ſo, by the repreſentations they have made to me of the opinion the world will form upon ſuch conduct——Encouragement or countenance from me, it will not receive; and, as to ſupporting the expence, it is quite out of my power——You will do well, therefore, to conſider, whether you had not better determine to go to France, where, I underſtand, your huſband is likely to be handſomely ſupported, till his affairs can be ſettled; and to accept the polite and handſome offer made by the foreign Duke, before it is too late——You remember, to be ſure, as you are fond of poetry, the line your poor father, on former occaſions,

occaſions, has quoted from Milton or Shakeſpeare, or ſome of your favorite authors----

> " The wife, where danger or diſhonor lurks,
> Seemlieſt and ſafeſt by her huſband ſtays."

At preſent, your ſeparation from Mr. Verney is altogether voluntary, and, therefore, highly improper; and quite inconſiſtent with the prudent line of behaviour, which I expect from a daughter of mine---ſuch, indeed, as lays me under the neceſſity of ſaying to you, though it may appear harſh, that I cannot let my daughter Frances ſee you, nor conſent to receive you myſelf, till I find you have determined to embrace the proper conduct of going to your huſband-----as to do otherwiſe, would be to encourage both, in what is in my own opinion, quite wrong; and give freſh occaſion for ſcandal, which has begun to be too buſy already.

I hope Mr. Deſmond will oblige me in forbearing, for the future, to interfere in the affairs of my family; and that I may not hear him named again in the ſame breath with any of them, unleſs on quite a different footing.

I deſire your ſpeedy determination, as to going abroad; and when you have taken a becoming reſolution, you ſhall not find me backward in kindneſs.---My circumſtances are, at preſent, much circumſcribed, by the neceſſity I am under to do my beſt in figure and appearance for your brother's approaching marriage with a woman, whoſe fortune and connexions are ſo proper and deſirable for him ---Nevertheleſs, I will ſtrain a point to grant you

you any little accommodation for your journey---though, certainly, not to ſupport you in a wilful ſeparation from your huſband, which nothing can excuſe, and no mother, who has a due ſenſe of propriety will encourage.

As to your three children, I am glad to hear from Frances, that you have weaned the little one, as that takes off one objection to your travelling. You may leave them all very properly, with ſome careful perſon; and, if they are near this place, I will ſee now and then, that they are well looked after.

I am (if ſo your conduct ſhall allow me to ſubſcribe myſelf)

Your affectionate mother,

ELIZABETH WAVERLY.

LETTER XII.

TO MR. BETHEL.

Sedgewood, Kent, June 24th, 1791.

WITH what calmneſs, my dear Bethel, do you recount a ſcene, that I cannot read, without feeling ſomething like frenzy. With how few remarks do you encloſe me a letter that deprives me of all patience and——— But it is the mother of Geraldine that writes it, (at leaſt, ſhe has always paſſed for ſuch, though one would be tempted to fancy there was an exchange made in her infancy) and I will not exclaim againſt her; but only entreat you to let me know, by the return of the poſt, whether the lovely perſecuted being to whom it is addreſſed, has taken any reſolution in conſequence of it. I dread, leſt that tender and dutiful ſweetneſs of character, to which her wretched marriage was owing, ſhould again betray her into this deteſted meaſure; and that her ideas of obedience to her odious mother, and her worthleſs huſband ſhould precipitate her into the very abyſs of wretchedneſs.—My hope is, that the propoſal—ſo cool a propoſal too, that ſhe ſhould leave her children, will rouſe that proper ſpirit of reſiſtance againſt uſurped and abuſed authority which, for herſelf, ſhe would not, perhaps, exert.———To leave her children, to go herſelf to ſuch a huſband, eſcorted by a man to whom, I am perſuaded, he has ſold her; and all this, by the authority of an unfeeling old woman, who is ſolicitous for her fame,

for-

forſooth!———and diſpleaſed at my having called at her door, when I happened to be in a ſame neighbourhood

One is half tempted to fly out of the world in a fit of deſpair, when one conſiders how the farce of it is carried on, and what wretches exult in it, whoſe whole buſineſs ſeems to be to deſtroy the few comforts, and embitter the few pleaſures which it affords. ——I am totally unable to gueſs to whoſe curſed officiouſneſs it is owing, that this prudiſh, narrow-minded old woman (I cannot keep my temper with her) is ſo well informed of my having been at Bridge-foot; a ſecret I kept even from you, and fancied was unknown to all the world; ſince I had the precaution not to take even a ſervant with me ———I could execrate with a moſt hearty good will, her informers whoever they may be; and wiſh I could draw a drop of blood from their hearts for every tear this diabolical buſineſs has drawn from the eyes of Geraldine ——But a heart that can wantonly injure *her*, can have no warm blood in it———It muſt be ſome diſappointed prude, or uncharitable pedant. I know none of either deſcription at all likely to interfere with me—yet, if I could diſcover them, I ſhould be tempted to expoſe them to ſomething worſe than this apoſtrophe—

" I tell thee, damned prieſt,
" A miniſtering angel ſhall my ſiſter be
" When thou lieſt howling!—"*

It is in vain, my dear Bethel, for me to attempt calling off my mind a moment from

* Shakeſpeare.

Geraldine; and were it not that my preſence might expoſe her to a repetition of theſe odious ſuſpicions, I ſhould be now at Bath; whither you knew it was fully my purpoſe to go when I quitted Herefordſhire, had not ſhe been driven thither, and made my going juſt at the ſame time improper; though I was then far from dreaming of all the occaſion there exiſted for my precaution.

As it is, I muſt remain here, at leaſt, till I have your anſwer; which I entreat you to forward to me as ſoon as poſſible; for, till it comes, I can determine on nothing ——— and there is no ſituation ſo irkſome as the ſtate of ſuſpence I am now in; certain, that however it terminates, I muſt be wretched, but dreading what is of infinitely greater moment, that Geraldine my be yet more miſerable

Do not encourage me, Bethel, in the idea of her having for me perſonal regard ———I, who know and adore the unſullied purity of her mind, know, that the admiſſion of ſuch a ſentiment, however involuntary, would render her unhappy; and I would not obtain all the happineſs imagination can conceive, at the expence of giving her heart one reproachful pang.———You think this aſſeveration inconſiſtent with my raſhneſs, in concealing myſelf in the neighbourhood of her late reſidence———But beſides that I had other motives for my journey thither, than it is in my power to communicate to you; I proteſt to you that had not chance thrown me in her way, I ſhould not have *then* ſeen her.———This appears contradictory

and

and ridiculous, but I muſt be content to let you call it ſo.

How tedious, how irkſome is the ſort of life I have led the little time I have been here.———I find that the locality of our attachments depend upon the perſons that ſurround us, rather than the places where we are happy———I have preferred this ſmal eſtate as a reſidence, from my infancy; and here the moſt joyous hours of my life were paſt.———When I became my own maſter, I haſtened hither; and, as I repaired the old houſe, and ſaw the roads mended and the fences got in order, as I planted my ſhrubs, and gave directions for the care of my timber, procured modern comforts within the houſe, and put every thing without in order, a thouſand agreeable images returned of my former pleaſures; and with the ſanguine eye of youthful expectation, I looked forward to greater pleaſures yet to come.

I ſhall meet, ſaid I to myſelf, as I indulged theſe charming illuſions, with ſome lovely and amiable young woman, whoſe taſte is congenial with my own———One, who will be more pleaſed with this place, becauſe I love it, than with my other houſe; which, though larger and handſomer, is not in ſo beautiful a country, and to which I have no particular attachment. ——That, therefore, I will let, and reſide here altogether; and, when the naturally delicious ſituation is gradually improved, and a new room built for my books, I think, that with ſuch a woman as my imagination has formed, I ſhall here find happineſs

pineſs—if happineſs be ever the lot of humanity.

While I was looking out, therefore, for this "laſt beſt gift of heaven," I was as buſy in my improvements, and as delighted with my future paradiſe, as ever projector was with ſome favourite ſcheme that was to procure him millions.——Alas! deſtiny, inexorable deſtiny, was at work not only to deſtroy my lovely viſions, but to embitter their deſtruction by ſhewing me that they might have been all realized—At this period—near four years ago, I firſt ſaw Mrs. Verney; then only a few months married, and brought down by her huſband, for the firſt time, to his Kentiſh villa.—The beauty of her perſon, though that perſon is exactly what my fancy would form as the moſt lovely and perfect, made no immediate or deep impreſſion.—She was a married woman, and her beauty was not, therefore, to be conſidered by a man, looking out, as I was, for a wife, and who never harboured an idea of ſeducing the wife of another—Yet, perhaps, I liſtened with more pleaſure to her ſentiments, becauſe ſhe was eminently handſome.—I had liſtened but a little, before I diſcovered, to my utter confuſion, that ſhe was exactly the woman with whom I could be happy; and, in a few months, I found that I could never now be happy at all, for that ſhe could not be mine, and I could think with pleaſure of no other woman.

For above two years, under pretence of trying to reaſon myſelf out of this prepoſſeſſion, I cheriſhed it.—The unaffected

eaſe

eaſe and innocent freedom with which ſhe treated me, fed the flame that was conſuming me; but ſhe was totally unconſcious of it—And, though I could ſee that Mr. Verney was altogether unworthy of her, that ſhe was but too ſenſible of it; and had been married to him merely becauſe it was the will of her family. Believe me, Bethel, that I honoured highly that noble reſolution with which I ſaw ſhe not only bore, but tried to make the beſt of her lot; and never, in any one inſtance, attempted to raiſe a ſentiment in my own favour, to the prejudice of the affection which ſhe believed ſhe ought, and which ſhe tried to feel, for her huſband.—That huſband, who valued ſo little the bleſſing he poſſeſſed, that, after he had once gratified his pride, by ſhewing to his libertine friends the moſt beautiful woman of the time, as his wife, was accuſtomed to leave her for weeks and months together; and, while he was diſſipating his fortune in every ſpecies of extravagant folly, ſhe was either alone at Linwell, or had no other companion than Fanny Waverly, then a wild girl, between ſixteen and ſeventeen—juſt emerging from the nurſery into the delights of ſucceeding her ſiſter as a beauty: and who, though heartily rejoiced to eſcape from her mother, ſeemed then not to be ſo advanced in underſtanding, as to be a companion for her, though there was not the difference of two years in their ages.

It was at theſe periods when Geraldine was ſo much in ſolitude at Linwell, that my attachment took ſo deep root.—I found by her pre-

preferring the country even at ſeaſons when ſhe might have been in London—I found by her taſte for reading, for drawing, for domeſtic pleaſures, that ſhe was, in every reſpect, the very woman my imagination had formed.—The more I ſaw of her, the more I felt this—yet could I not determine to quit her, till your remonſtrances and ſome fears, leſt with Verney's encreaſing follies, my regret and murmurings might encreaſe alſo, and to her prejudice, determined me to go abroad—How ſucceſsleſs that expedient has been in regard to curing me of my paſſion for her, you know too well—What ill conſequences have otherwiſe attended it, I hope you will never know at all.

But I was about to relate the effect that my former friendly and innocent intercourſe with this lovely woman, has on my preſent frame of mind; and how it touches, with peculiar ſadneſs, every object around me.

This place, though more than ſix miles from Linwell, and almoſt as far again from Hartfield, is yet, you know at that diſtance, which in the country conſtitutes near neighbourhood.—I was at ſchool at Eaton with Verney, and though on our entrance into life, his purſuits and mine were ſo different, that no intimacy could ſubſiſt between us, yet our acquaintance was of courſe renewed, when we both came to ſettle in this country.——I viſited equally at the houſe, whether he was at home or no; and, at length, I was reſtrained only by my fears of injuring the reputation of Geraldine, from ſeeing her every day; for all other ſociety was inſipid or diſguſting.

At

At that time Geraldine rode on horſeback, or drove her ſiſter in a cabriole; and, as ſhe was fond of gardening, I ſometimes uſed to ſolicit her opinion on the alterations I was making-----and when ſhe approved what I had directed, or gave me any idea of her own, I purſued my plans of improvement with redoubled alacrity.----Her preſence gave to every object a charm which I now look for in vain! ---And the groups of ſhrubs which were then planted by her direction, now grow and flouriſh, as if to remind me only of the happineſs I have loſt----a happineſs which one half the world would call chimerical, and the other half abſurd and ridiculous.---but which nevertheleſs *was comparative happineſs*; for when I knew I could ſee her at any time in an hour, and that I ſhould paſs an hour or two near her, twice or thrice in the courſe of the week; I repreſſed, if I could not entirely deſtroy, the regret which aroſe on reflecting that her life was dedicated to another.

I have been moſt decidedly miſerable ever ſince I have been here; every body tires me, and buſineſs or converſation alike diſguſt and teize me.—I fancied that after an abſence of twelve months, the former might, for a time, occupy my mind; but Beſt, who you know I left as a ſteward, is ſo intolerably ſlow and ſtupid, that it is quite impoſſible for me to attend to his accounts and his details—however he is very honeſt, and all ſeems right enough—and I have given him his diſcharges. The good folks of the neighbourhood have perſecuted me every morning----poſt chaiſes and whiſkies,

whiſkies, and cavaliers, have beſet my door. ----Some of theſe worthy people I have ſeen, becauſe I happened to meet them in the grounds, and they were ſo happy at my return, and ſo full of obliging hopes that I was coming to live among them, and be a good neighbour, that really I was concerned to diſappoint them; eſpecially certain amiable gentlewomen between fifty and ſixty, who have daughters between twenty-and thirty, and who are ſo good as to be particularly ſolicitous for my ſettling in their neighbourhood.—One of theſe, an acquaintance it ſeems of my mother's, came in a ſolemn embaſſy, like a dowager queen of Sheba, to viſit me, whom ſhe praiſed quite into a Solomon; but, as ſhe piques herſelf upon ſpeaking her mind freely (and is of courſe the terror of all her acquaintance) ſhe told me ſhe ſhould not ſpare *my* faults; for ſhe loved me for the ſake of her old friend, my dear mother, and knew I had too much ſenſe not to underſtand ſhe ſpoke out of ſincere regard; when ſhe pointed out ſome errors in my conduct, which ſo good and promiſing a young man, *one who was ſuch a credit to the times*, would do well to correct.

I cannot ſay I much liked this exordium—Conſcience told me I had committed errors enough, which ſuch a ſybil might ſtrike at; but I felt the moſt uneaſy in a matter where my conſcience totally acquitted me.—I figured to myſelf that ſhe might allude to my journey into Wales; and, I believe, my countenance betrayed my apprehenſions, for ſhe cried—"Oh! but my dear Sir, don't bluſh ſo—I ſhall

ſhall not touch upon family ſecrets (nodding ſignificantly)—No, no— I only mean to aſk you, how you *can* like to go ſo often to that odious France, which, at all times, was the ruin of all the fine young men that ever went there in my memory, and now muſt be much worſe; for, I underſtand, they have neither church nor king---neither money nor bread ---a ſad race of people always; and nothing ever ſeemed to me ſo abſurd as ſending an Engliſh gentleman among them.----As to you, I don't, indeed, ſee any great change in you yet, except that you have loſt your Engliſh complexion----but I heartily hope you'll go no more----but ſit down quietly and creditably at home, with a good diſcreet young woman for your wife, and have no hankerings after theſe foreign doings.----There was a report got about, that you had either been married in France, or got a French miſtreſs---I am heartily glad to find there's no truth in ſuch a rumour----Indeed I always ſaid----No, no, ſays I, Mr. Deſmond, if I underſtand him at all, has better notions---Take *my* word for it, who have known him ever ſince he was an infant, that he has good ſound honeſt Engliſh principles at bottom, and loves his own country, and his own country folks, and we ſhall ſee him come and ſettle among us----a yeoman of Kent: which is better than any French duke or marquis, or grandee of them all."----To the truth of this poſition I heartily aſſented; and felt relieved that nothing had alarmed this Truly Britiſh matron, more than a friendly dread of my having imported a French miſtreſs---She did not,

not, however, end her very long visit, till she had again most seriously exhorted me to put away all foreign vanities, and come to see her.----She assured me her daughter, Dorothy, was returned from visiting her aunt in the North, quite altered for the better in her health, and longing to see her old play-fellow, Mr. Desmond----and that her youngest, Marianne, was grown out of my knowledge, and quite a fine young woman.--- What could defend an heart thus strongly beset, but a predilection, against which neither Dorothy nor Marianne can contend?

My dear Bethel, I expect your next letter with impatience, that is beyond the power of words to describe; five days must pass before I can be relieved----but keep me not in suspence an hour longer ----Day after day I linger here in tortures, even greater than you are aware of; I rise in a morning only to count the moments, till the return of the messenger I send for letters; and then to become splenetic for the rest of the day, if he does not bring me letters from you or from some other person who can name the situation of Geraldine.

She did, indeed, promise to write to me herself; and I have expected her performance of that promise with torturing inquietude---- But now I can too well account for her having failed in it; and, since these infernal gossips have raised such suspicions, I shall not hear from her at all.----Oh! I could curse them---- but you will have no patience if I suffer myself to relapse into the useless execrations of impotent rage.

I wander

I wander about like a wretched reſtleſs being---- now trying to ſit down to books of which I know not one word, though I pore over them for hours; now hiding myſelf in the woods from the horrible importunity of viſitors whoſe kindneſs I cannot return.

Relieve me ſoon, dear Behel, from this miſerable ſtate, or in a fit of deſperation, I may ſet out for Bath.

LIONEL DESMOND.

LETTER XIII.

TO MR. DESMOND.

Bath, 28th June, 1791.

I HAVE this moment your letter of the 24th, which diſtreſſes, but does not amaze me. I expect to have you enacting very ſoon the part of an Engliſh Werter; for you ſeem far gone in his ſpecies of inſanity; and I fear what I have to ſay to you to day, will only feed this unhappy frenzy.—You tell me, however, that if you do not hear from me exactly at the time you expect,) without ever conſidering that many circumſtances, quite immaterial to the cauſe of your ſolicitude, may prevent my being ſo very punctual) you may, perhaps, ſet off for Bath, in a fit of deſperation———I write, therefore; for though ſure to inflict pain, by all I have to ſay, it will (if you have yet a ſhadow of reaſon left) prevent a greater evil—Your coming now to Bath would be abſolute madneſs; and abſolutely uſeleſs as to any ſervice you could render Geraldine—If, in this diſpoſition of mind, you can attend to the moſt extraordinary events, that do not immediately belong to its cauſe, you, perhaps, may have heard the news of the flight of the King of France and his family, which arrived here yeſterday—The ſame poſt brought letters to Geraldine from her huſband, written in great haſte, and with great exultation.—He ſeems to doubt, from the purport of de Romagnecourt's letter, after his firſt interview, whether ſhe would accompany him; and therefore

fore ſends to the Duke's agent, in London, a letter to her, containing more poſitive injunctions; and bills for ſixty pounds, with which, in caſe the Duke ſhould be departed, he directs her inſtantly to ſet out for Paris, by way of Dieppe and Rouen; and, if ſhe *muſt* have it ſo, to bring her children; but, at all events, to begin her journey immediately.—He tells her, that though he is, at preſent, in Auſtrian Flanders, meaſures are ſo arranged, that his friends will, in a very ſhort time, return in triumph to Paris, where he is aſſured of a ſplendid ſupport; and the immediate means of retrieving his affairs—This letter, which is couched in the moſt poſitive and forcible terms he could deviſe, was forwarded by the agent of the Duke, who, it appears, knew that Geraldine was at Bath.—On the receipt of it, ſhe ſent for me; and putting the letter into my hands, ſat down, and fell into an agony of tears.

I aſked her, as ſoon as I recovered a little from my ſurpriſe and concern, what ſhe meant to do?—"I go," replied ſhe—"I have now no longer a reaſon againſt it—at leaſt, none that will be attended to; and I muſt obey—"

"Good God!" exclaimed I, in diſtreſs I could not conceal, "is this a time to order you, unguarded and alone, to undertake ſuch a journey; and to enter a capital, which muſt, from the preſent circumſtances, be in conſternation and confuſion?—If you muſt go, I cannot bear the thoughts of your going unprotected."—"And yet," ſaid ſhe, "that is the very circumſtance that determines me; for, with ſuch protection as Mr. Verney had before choſen for me, I would not have gone."

gone."—She ſighed deeply, but dried her eyes.—"It is over, added ſhe—"I took the liberty of troubling you to come to me, Mr. Bethel, to aſk your friendly advice; but I now ſee, on a moment's farther conſideration, that I have but one part to take; and that I have done wrong to heſitate."

"Pardon me," replied I—"I rather think, my dear Madam, you will be more wrong, ſhould you determine too haſtily. Does your ſiſter—does your mother know of this letter; and the *command* it contains?"

"My ſiſter does; for ſhe was here when I received it half an hour ago — She left me to acquaint my mother with it, whom I have not yet been permitted to ſee----But, as ſhe has kept me at a diſtance from her, becauſe ſhe conceived diſpleaſure at my not conſenting to go before, ſhe will, undoubtedly, have a ſtronger reaſon to inſiſt on my going now.------My brother, Mr. Waverly, has, at laſt, determined on all the preliminaries and preparations for his marriage, which has been ſo long in ſuſpence—It is to be concluded on immediately---I am, I know, in the way; they can neither invite me to the joyous feſtivity with pleaſure, or leave me out with decency.---I have now money to go abroad, which my mother will inſiſt upon my uſing for the purpoſe my huſband deſigned it; and *ſhe* will be relieved from the apprehenſions which I know ſhe has been under, leſt ſhe ſhould be compelled to advance money for my ſupport here ---Againſt all theſe reaſons on her part, which ſhe will enforce by the powerful words, *duty* and *obedience*----What have I to offer?----My fears; they will be treated as chimerical----nor, in

fact

fact do I entertain any) My reluctance! that will be imputed to very unworthy and very falſe motives -- -In a word, though I will await Fanny's return, before I begin to make actual preparations for my immediate journey, I am perfectly aſſured, that my mother's orders will enforce thoſe of Mr. Verney; and that I muſt go."

At this inſtant, Fanny Waverly, her eyes ſwoln, and the tears ſtill ſtreaming down her cheeks, entered the room; and throwing herſelf into the arms of Geraldine, ſobbed aloud, and hid her face in her boſom----Geraldine, by a glorious effort of reſolution, inſtead of yielding to the anguiſh, under which I could ſee ſhe was ill able to ſupport herſelf, tried to ſoothe and tranquillize her ſiſter.---" Come, come, my Fanny," ſaid ſhe, " be compoſed ----I knew, before you went, the meſſage with which you would return----I, therefore, am prepared for it; and I entreat you not to let it thus affect you."

The agonizing grief of the one, and the tender fortitude of the other, were, to me, equally affecting; and, as I contemplated one ſiſter weeping in the arms of the other, who, by a painful reſtraint, exerted that fortitude, not to add to her afflictions; I was on the point of taking them both in my arms, and ſwearing to defend and protect them with my life and fortune.-----The ſcene however, was too diſtreſſing to be endured long ---Fanny continued weeping too much to be able to deliver her mother's meſſage; and Geraldine, who had led her to a chair, hung over her, ſupporting her head, and holding her

her hands, with *such* a look!----*She*, however, did not now shed a tear; but her paleness, her trembling, and the expressive look she threw towards me, explained, too clearly, what passed in her heart.----At this moment, the servant, who was not aware of this afflicting interview, entered with the three children------ At the sight of them, I saw that Geraldine's resolution was about to forsake her; and when the little boy ran up to Fanny, and entreated her not to cry, she became absolutely convulsed; and Geraldine, after an ineffectual struggle of a moment, hastily left the room, and waved her hand for the maid and the children to follow her.

I was then alone with Fanny Waverly; but I knew not how to attempt pacifying the violence of her emotions----She seemed, indeed, incapable of hearing me----I approached her, however, and took her hand.

"You injure yourself," said I, "and your sister, by thus giving way to immoderate sorrow----Command yourself, my dear Miss Waverly, for her sake; and tell me, I beseech you, if I can be of any use in mitigating distress, which, from my soul, I lament."

"Oh! Mr. Bethel!" answered she inarticulately, "my mother is so cruel----so very cruel to Geraldine, that it breaks my heart---- She has heard the purport of Verney's letter; and ordered me back to fly, that it was not only her opinion that she ought to set out, but her *command* that she should instantly prepare for doing so; on which condition alone she will receive, and give her her blessing. ----I own I remonstrated rather earnestly with my mother, but I was so far from obtaining any

any mitigation, that I was very ſeverely reproved for daring to queſtion the propriety of her deciſion; and bade to obſerve, that if I preſumed to attempt influencing my ſiſter to act contrary to her duty, ſo clearly pointed out, it would be at my own peril; and that I muſt, in that caſe, be content to ſhare the fate that muſt ſoon overwhelm my ſiſter; but, indeed, Mr. Bethel, continued ſhe, it is not *that* threat that ſhould deter or frighten me, if I were not too ſure that I ſhould be a burthen to Geraldine, and only encreaſe her difficulties."

"Do not, however, encreaſe them now, my amiable friend," ſaid I, "by theſe deep expreſſions of anguiſh——I do aſſure you, that your ſiſter had anticipated all the purport of the meſſage that diſtreſſes you; and that it will ſhock her leſs than you imagine----Try therefore, to recover yourſelf----tell her the truth, and aſſiſt her in forming ſuch a reſolution as is beſt----*I own* I think that is, to brave the worſt that can happen by ſtaying; and to refuſe to ſet out at leaſt, till ſhe hears Mr. Verney is at Paris to receive her."

As if relieved, by hearing that this was my opinion, and in the hope that it would influence her ſiſter, Fanny now flew to her----She and her ſervant were only in the next room with the children; I waited, a moment, the iſſue of the conference, and a violent burſt of weeping aſſured me, too well, that it would be moſt affecting --- This, however, was from Fanny Waverly; for, in five or ſix minutes, Geraldine re-entered the dining-room, with forced ſerenity; ſhe even tried to ſmile, when ſhe ſaid, "this dear girl is ſo unfortunately

full of sensibility and affection, that it is impossible to pacify her---She fancies I go to meet anarchy and murder in France; and on seeing me packing up mine and my children's clothes, that I may be ready to set out to-morrow, she has relapsed into the wildest expressions of sorrow---I wish you would try, Mr. Bethel, since she will listen to and believe you, to reason here out of these groundless apprehensions."

"I wish," said I, "that I *could* set about that without forfeiting my sincerity, but, upon my honor, I do not think, and therefore cannot say, her apprehensions are groundless."

"*I*, however, have no fears, Mr. Bethel ----The French, of whatsoever party I may fall among, will not hurt a woman and children!------On admitting it possible, that in some of those popular commotions, that are, certainly, likely to convulse, for some time, a kingdom just bursting into freedom from the grasp of the most oppressive tyranny, I might be involved; (which is extremely unlikely) Good God! what have I to fear?---- -Not death! assuredly; for there is hardly one situation, in which I can *now* be placed, to which death would not be preferable. ---I will be very sincere, my good friend, and say honestly, that after what I know, and what I *suspect* of Mr. Verney, I had rather meet death than be in his power----I had rather meet it than my mother's unkindness----infinitely rather, than to know that I and my poor little ones (her voice almost failed her) should be a burthen to *her*, who is so unwilling to bear it, even for a little while.-- -Has then death any terrors for me? and can one who fears not death

death ſhrink from danger?---If I get among the wildeſt collection of thoſe people, whoſe ferocity ariſes not from their preſent liberty, but their recent bondage, is it poſſible to ſuppoſe they will injure *me*, who am myſelf a miſerable ſlave, returning with trembling and reluctant ſteps, to put on the moſt dreadful of all fetters?---Fetters that would even deſtroy the freedom of my mind." I was exceſſively ſtruck with the manner in which ſhe ſpoke this; nor did I imagine that her ſoft features and dove-like eyes, could have aſſumed ſuch an expreſſion of ſpirit---She ſaw, I believe, I was ſurpriſed---"Why," ſaid I, "do you put on theſe fetters, if you feel them to be ſo inſupportable?"

"Becauſe," returned ſhe, "it is my *duty*; and while I fulfil that, I can always appeal to a judge, who will not only acquit, but reward me, if I act up to it——The more terrible the taſk, the greater the merit I aſſume in fulfilling it; beſides that, my mother's inhumanity has leſſened its horrors.

——————'Thou'dſt ſhun a bear;
But if thy flight lay towards the roaring ſea,
Thou'dſt meet the bear in the mouth."*

"Well! but," ſaid I, "not to ſpeak of Mr. Verney, whoſe conduct is in every way unpardonable; not to ſpeak of the dangers that may attend journeying towards Paris, at preſent; and which may perhaps, be partly imaginary——Give me leave to aſk, how are you able, with three young children, and only a maid ſervant, to encounter the fatigues of

* Shakeſpeare.

so long a journey?—I have heard you say you are excessively affected by sea sickness; and that nothing overcomes you more than hurry; yet here are you about to encounter both the one and the other, with only a young, helpless English girl as a servant, who will be terrified to death every step she takes.

"Ah! Mr. Bethel!" replied Geraldine, shaking her head mournfully, "you oblige me again to use a quotation—

> ——— When the mind's free,
> The bodys delicate; the tempest in my mind,
> Doth from my senses take all feeling else,
> Save what beats there."*

"What then," said I, "for God's sake tell me—what is your resolution? and in what way can I render more easy, any that you will absolutely adopt?"

"My resolution, my good friend, is, to set out very early to-morrow for France, by the *route* Mr. Verney has directed—If there is a possibility of getting, by that time, a female servant, who speaks a little French; and of hiring a man servant, on whom I can depend, I will do both; in these instances, perhaps, your friendly assistance may be exerted."

"And you are positively determined to go?"

"So positively, that I have sent to enquire whether I can have a coach here; if not I must have two post chaises, which will be much less convenient; and if I cannot here procure the servants I want, I must take the chance of getting them either from London, whither I shall write this evening, or at Brighthelmstone,

* Shakespeare.

where

where I ſhall embark; and to which place I ſhall go, by way of Saliſbury and Chicheſter, without going round by London."

I now ſaw, that the moſt eſſential ſervice I could render our lovely, unhappy friend, was to ſet out inſtantly in queſt of ſuch perſons and accommodations as ſhe wanted; I knew that it was abſolutely neceſſary for her to have a coach, and not to truſt to French vehicles—It was equally neceſſary to procure for her a truſty man ſervant.----Theſe, therefore, I ſet about finding; and by a ſingular piece of good fortune, I found, at the livery-ſtable where I applied, a very good coach, that was left there to be ſold, by the executors of a gentleman, who had it made new for his journey to Bath, where he died ſoon after his arrival----It was fitted up with many conveniences for an invalid under the neceſſity of travelling; and was exactly ſuited to carry ſuch a family as that for whoſe uſe I now purchaſed it; ordering the man, who had the ſale of it, to tell Mrs. Verney, "that he had directions to let it at a price he named; which was to be paid on returning it;" for that I had otherwiſe managed the matter, was, of neceſſity, a ſecret.

It was infinitely more difficult to procure her a ſervant, and it was near one o'clock in the morning when I gave up the hope of ſatisfying myſelf in this reſpect.---I could not however, determine to let her go either without one, or with one with whoſe character I was not perfectly ſatisfied; and therefore, after ſome deliberation, I reſolved to ſend my own man, Thomas Wrightſon, with her; as I can do very well without him, till I can find ſome proper perſon to ſend over to her, or hear of her having

ing provided herself with one there----Thomas, indeed, does not speak any French to signify, though he was once at Paris with me; but he is very honest and active; and, upon my proposing it to him, he said---"that though upon no other account whatever he would quit me, unless my honour was pleased to discharge him; yet, for such a lady as Mrs. Verney, in such a time to be sure, he would go through fire and water, by night or by day."---I assured him there would be very little water, and, I believed, no fire whatever to go through; and having settled the terms which made it a matter of profit, as well as chivalry to honest Thomas, I dispatched, late as it was, a note to Geraldine, to inform her how this was settled; and had the pleasure to hear, in an answer written by herself, that she was extremely well satisfied with the arrangements I had made for her; and had, in the mean time, been lucky in her own endeavours; having made a fortunate discovery of a person between forty and fifty, who had been a governess at a school at Bath, and was desirous of attending any lady to Mante, of which place she was a native, for the consideration of the expences of her journey.---Geraldine added, that as she had been indefatigable in her preparations, every thing would be ready, and she should depart at eight o'clock the next morning; when she intended driving to the door of her mother, to take leave of her, and receive the *promised blessing*; and that she begged of me to meet her a little without the town, to walk back with Fanny (who was to go so far in the coach with her) and to receive her last

laſt acknowledgments, for what ſhe termed my unexampled friendſhip.

I knew that much was yet to be done of which ſhe was not aware.---I aroſe therefore, at five o'clock, and had my banker here called; who gave me a letter of credit on Paris for an hundred pounds; and another to a gentleman at Rouen, to entreat his attention to the travellers, in regard to exchanging their money, or any other little office of kindneſs; and, thus prepared I waited impatiently for the hour, when the coach which contained our lovely exile, was to overtake me on the road. ---I had proceeded near a mile beyond the place of appointment, when it appeared---It ſtopped on approaching me---I found only Geraldine, Fanny and the children in it, for that her laſt conference with her ſiſter and with me might not be interrupted, the two female attendants were ordered to follow ſo far on foot, and the coach was to ſtay for them.

I trembled as I drew near the ſcene I was to paſs through---Fanny, her face covered with her handkerchief, was ſobbing bitterly---Geraldine was pale and trembling, but an artificial compoſure, ſeemed to be the effect of the effort ſhe was obliged to make to ſupport herſelf, ſoothe her ſiſter, and attend to her children---The moment I ſaw her countenance, I ſaw too plainly written there, the cruel harſhneſs of her mother, but ſhe tried to ſpeak with ſteadineſs, when ſhe begged of me to get into the coach.---I obeyed: but I was infected with the tender ſorrows of the party I found there, and could ſay nothing to conſole them.

I had, however, no time to loſe in indulging uſeleſs ſympathy; I took, therefore, out of

of my pocket, the letters I had obtained.—I told her, that by one, she would find herself entitled to a small credit, in case she should want it, which would be no inconvenience to me; and her taking it was the only proof I required of that friendship which she had so often declared she favoured me with—That the other letter was to a gentleman at Rouen, who might be serviceable to her on her way—"And now, dear Mrs. Verney," said I, "unless any thing more can be devised for your service, Miss Waverly and I will say farewell; for this parting, this sad parting will hurt you too much; and I fear"—"It is true," said she, interrupting me, "that it is wiser to part while we are yet able—Fanny, my most beloved sister, have pity upon yourself and me, and do not destroy me quite by your affection, which is now almost cruelty."

Poor Fanny threw her arm round her sister's neck, and, with a deep and convulsive sigh, kissed her, but could not speak.——— At the same moment Geraldine gave me her hand, on which fell, as I pressed it to my lips the only tear I have shed for some years; it was cruel to prolong thi scene, and, indeed, almost impossible to bear it—I therefore opened the coach door, leaped out, and Fanny Waverly, disengaging herself from the children with a sort of desperate resolution, followed me.—Geraldine was totally silent, and I dared not look towards her—but the little boy continued to call to his aunt Fanny, and to entreat her not to go from him, till the two women who had, by this time, come up with the coach, were helped in by Thomas; one of them very

wisely

wiſely drew up the coach-window, and on a ſignal from me, it drove very rapidly away.

I remained ſtanding in the road, ſupporting Miſs Waverly, who was drowned in tears, and choaked by ſpeechleſs ſorrow.——I ſpoke to her, entreating her to bear, with as much fortitude as ſhe could, a ſeparation that, however painful, would probably be ſhort ———She replied, in a voice broken by ſobs—"God knows how that may be, Mr. Bethel, but if I dared follow my inclinations, it ſhould be ſhort indeed."

"We muſt none of us," ſaid I, "follow our inclinations, when they are in oppoſition to ourduty, my dear young friend."

"And yet," cried ſhe, indignantly, "ſuch behaviour as I have juſt now witneſſed from Mrs. Waverly towards my ſiſter, ought, methinks, to diſſolve all ties of duty" —I was glad that her anger reſtored her to herſelf—I knew it was juſtly excited, but how juſtly I could not have believed, if Fanny had not by degrees deſcribed to me the whole ſcene between her mother and Geraldine.—I will not irritate your mind by relating it; ſuffice it to ſay, that pride, avarice and inſenſibility, never more effectually united to render a woman deteſtable; nor did ever angel ſhew a more decided contraſt to an evil ſpirit, than Geraldine at that trying moment formed to her mother.

Well, my dear Deſmond, it is over!—Geraldine is gone———To night ſhe propoſed being at Saliſbury, to morrow at Chicheſter, and on Saturday at Britghthelmſtone,

time enough for the packet, which is advertiſed to ſail on the evening of that day.

Before you receive this, therefore, ſhe will be embarked; and however you may execrate the cruel neceſſity that has compelled her to ſuch a ſtep, or reprobate as chimerical and ill-founded, that ſenſe of duty which urged her to obey this compulſatory mandate of Verney's, you will, now the die is thrown, ſubmit to what is inevitable—and perhaps the certainty that your misfortune is without remedy, (for Geraldine's return to her huſband you will certainly conſider as a misfortune,) is the only thing that could teach you to bear, or induce you to attempt conquering your regret.----Aſſure yourſelf, that as to her journey, ſhe has every accommodation to render it as tolerable as, under ſuch circumſtances, it could be made----The pain of her mind I could not remove, but hope and believe I have exempted her from ſuffering much perſonal inconvenience.

And now, Deſmond, ſince I have as gradually as I could, diſcloſed this ſudden and painful tranſaction, let me ſpeak a word or two from, and of myſelf.———You are by this time convinced, that to come hither could anſwer no purpoſe as to Geraldine, but it would certainly alarm the old lady, who has got it moſt invincibly fixed in her imagination that you have a deſign upon her daughter, and have influenced her to refuſe going to her huſband the firſt time he ſent for her.----Fanny Waverly has in vain tried to diſcover from whom this intelligence came; her mother hears not your name mentioned with patience, and ſhould you now appear here, it is very likely

in

in her *imprudent prudence*, to call it purſuing her daughter and inſulting the family. It will be cruel too to poor Fanny, who could only ſee you either by ſtealth or by chance---- one would be extremely improper, and the other by no means conducive to the reſtoration of her tranquillity; for it is eaſy to ſee ſhe has entertained a partiality for you, which her good ſenſe and her pride have aſſiſted her to conquer, on the conviction that you are in love with her ſiſter——for that you certainly are ſo, ſhe is, I can perceive, perfectly aware, though ſhe carefully avoids ever hinting at it to me.

Coming hither to meet me, is now quite out of the queſtion, as I ſhall only be here about ſix days more——long enough, however, to receive a letter from you, which I hope will tell me, that your mind is more ſubdued to your fortune, than it was when you wrote laſt; however, that fortune may have become more perverſe, and that you have determined to ſit down for ſome months, at leaſt, quietly in Kent, where I hope you will recover your reaſon.----Receive for that and every good, the moſt ſincere wiſhes of,

Your's moſt truly,

E. BETHEL.

P. S. I ſhall leave Louiſa here, as both ſhe and Miſs Waverly deſire it——and ſhall return in the Autumn----and then ſhe will go back with me to Hartfield.

LET-

LETTER XIV

TO MR. BETHEL.

Sedgewood, July 2, 1791.

GERALDINE so suddenly gone! and to meet her husband, who, when she arrives at Paris, will probably not be there as he proposed—as the event that has since happened, the King of France's return, must inevitably make an alteration in those plans, whatever they were, that his noble foreign friends had projected for him--- I am in such a state of mind that I know not what I write—But do not, my dear Bethel, hurry from Bath one day sooner on my account, as I have business which will inevitably call me from hence—and I shall set out to-morrow on an absence of a few weeks, perhaps; but as I do not know exactly where I shall be, and shall have my letters sent after me as soon I do know, continue to direct hither. ---I am extremely interested for Fanny Waverly (though I am persuaded you are mistaken as to her honouring me with her partial esteem) and most heartily do I wish that you could see her in the same light as you wish me to do----She deserves a better fate than she will probably meet with, if her hateful mother is to dispose of her.----Oh! where at this moment is Geraldine?----to what fatigues and perils may she not be exposed?---I thank you, however, for all your friendly attention to her—Would to heaven I could have been apprized of her going----but that was certainly impossible---- and again I thank you for doing all that could be

be done on such short notice.----Good God! what would have been her situation had you not been at Bath?----I should never have retained my senses, had she departed on such a journey without the accommodations you contrived to collect for her.

If I could divert my mind a moment from this uneasy subject, I should call upon you to rejoce with me, my friend, at the calmness and magnanimity shewn by the French people, on the re-entrance of the King into Paris-------This will surely convince the world, that the *bloody democracy* of Mr. Burke, is not a combination of the swinish multitude, for the purposes of anarchy, but the association of reasonable beings, who determine to be, and deserve to be, free.-------I would ask the tender-hearted personages who affect to be deeply hurt at the misfortunes of royalty, whether if this treachery, this violation of oaths so solemnly given, had been successful, and the former government restored by force of arms, the then triumphant monarch and his aristocracy, would, with equal heroism, have beheld the defeat and captivity of the leaders of the people---and whether any indignities would have been thought too degrading, any punishment too severe for them---Then would the *King's castles** have been rebuilt, and *lettres de cachet* have re-peopled the dungeons!

I rejoice as a man, that it is otherwise---- and I believe and hope, from the present dispostion of the people, that a permanent constitution will now soon be established, in which all the power to do good shall be left in the hands of the chief magistrate, but none to become a despot.---Some evils, however,

* Mr Burke's name for the Bastile.

must

muſt be felt before this great work can be completed---and, perhaps, ſome blood ſtill ſhed; but when all the ill that has yet happened (allowing even the moſt exaggerated accounts of it to be as true) is compared with the calamities of only one campaign in America, for a point which at laſt we did not carry, and ought not to have attempted; I own I am aſtoniſhed at the effrontery of our miniſterial declaimers, who having ſupported the one, have dared to execrate the other.

Shall you hear of Geraldine?---Are there any hopes of her writing to me?---Did ſhe mention me on the day of her departure?---Oh! what would I not give for one, only one line from her, to ſay ſhe is ſafe in France---Yet how can ſhe be ſafe any where while in the power of ſuch a man as Verney?---And how could her mother compel her to put herſelf into it a ſecond time?

You need not apprehend my now viſiting Bath, againſt which, at the beginning of your letter, you remonſtrate as gravely as if you ſuppoſed I ſhould really ſet out to ſee where Geraldine *had* been---the evil conſequences of it I own I cannot imagine; for, as it is known ſhe is not there, it could hardly be ſuppoſed I came after her.---However, as you are ſo ſoon leaving it, as I have really buſineſs elſewhere, and may, perhaps, ſoon ſee you in this part of the world, a journey thither now is quite out of the queſtion.

If you write by the return of the poſt, perhaps your letter may ſtill find me here, for

for I am not at all well; and though I have had ſometimes thoughts of ſetting out to-morrow, as I mentioned in the beginning of my letter, yet I now believe it as likely I may defer my journey for ſome days.

Adieu, my dear Bethel,

Your's ever,

LIONEL DESMOND.

LETTER XV.

TO MR. DESMOND.

July 6th, 1791.

ARE you quite candid with me, Desmond ?---And are you really going, you know not when, you know not whither ?---Is it quite like my friend, even under the influence of this unhappy passion, to be so very unsettled in his plans ?---It is however, more unlike him to be disingenuous !---More unlike him, to take a step the most injurious, that can be devised, to Geraldine !---I mean going to France in pursuit of her---You surely cannot be so indiscreet, nay, I will call it so cruel as to meditate this.---You tell me, that if I write by the return of the post, you shall, on second thoughts probably receive, my letter at Sedgewood---I write, therefore ; and I conjure you if you read it in England, let nothing induce you to cross the Channel till you are assured that Geraldine is with her husband, and till there is no longer any danger of those reports gaining ground, which, (I cannot conjecture how,) have certainly got into circulation here of your attachment to her.

On the supposition, therefore, that you foresee all this, and that the indecision and confusion of your last letter, arose, not from any project of this kind, but merely from the painful sensations occasioned by the first shock of Geraldine's departure I write as you

you desire, by the return of the post, and direct my letter to Sedgewood.

To answer first your questions---Geraldine has not yet written to me; but she assured me she would write the moment her embarkation was certain, and again from Dieppe, by the return of the packet.—These letters, therefore, I hourly expect—I have very anxiously watched the wind ever since the day, when it was probable, she would reach the coast, and till Thursday it has been exactly contrary, and so high that I am persuaded she did not sail before that day, though, from the change since, I have no doubt but that she is by this time far on her way to Paris.

You enquire, whether, on the day of her departure, Geraldine spoke of you?—Yes! my friend; but it was with that guarded propriety her situation demanded.—She spoke of her obligations to you; she expressed the most earnest wishes for your happiness, and said, "When I am settled in France, if, indeed, I am to be settled, I shall take the liberty of troubling Mr. Desmond with a letter."—A faint blush trembled on her cheek, and her voice faultered as she added, "He spoke I think, of being soon in France himself, do you think he intends it.

I replied, that you had talked of it to me in your letter, but that I knew nothing certainly.—I saw that all the consequences of your going when she did, occurred to her, yet, perhaps, she secretly, and without daring to avow it even to herself, wished you might, while she persuaded herself she feared it—To me, however, she spoke of it no more; but simply

ſimply deſired her compliments and good wiſhes to you almoſt the moment ſhe bade adieu to me and her ſiſter—This I did not mention to you before, nor ſhould I have done it now, but that it is neceſſary to be ſincere when you queſtion me: yet, as you ſometimes proteſt, though I think, you are not uniformly conſiſtent in your declarations, that you do not even wiſh ſhe ſhould feel for you a partiality which, by the conſciouſneſs of its impropriety, might render her more unhappy; I wonder you ſhould aſk what you do not deſire to know.

I thank you for your wiſhes to promote me to the favor of Miſs Waverly, but have you ſufficiently conſidered the difference of our ages——I am, alas! in my fortieth year —I believe Fanny is not two-and twenty; and if I did not greatly ſuſpect that her little fluttering heart has felt more than mere friendſhip for you, *I* could never hope to become acceptable to a young woman ſurrounded as ſhe is, with flattery and admiration; or, admitting it probable, would it be very diſcreet in me to give Louiſa a mother-in-law not above eleven years older than herſelf—No, my dear Deſmond, *I* muſt not think of nymphs of twenty-one.

Your uncle Danby, who is the moſt profound politician that frequents the coffee-houſes of this news-demanding and news-affording city, has, within this laſt fortnight, been very ſolicitouſly enquiring of me about you; nor could his curioſity relative to your motions, have been ſuperceded by any thing but his greater anxiety about the motions of the King of France—Now he is ſo entirely engroſſed

grossed by his lamentations over disappointed treachery, and so concerned that the intended evasion of Louis XVI. which would have plunged France, if not all Europe, into an immediate war, has failed, that he has not a mind capacious enough to attend to your interests too, and therefore is content to let you be as romantic and absurd as you please, till it is decided whether the French will receive their king again, or immediately declare the nation a republic.

It is, indeed, a speculation important enough to occupy a more enlarged and enlightened understanding than that of the good Major; and never were the eyes of the European nations fixed on a more interesting spectacle.

The Major and I differ less on the subject of politics than on any other, though on that we are far from thinking alike; it is, however, the only kind of conversation I can long hold with him; because in all that relates to common life, there is in his ideas and expressions, a hardness and coarseness that sometimes shocks and always repulses me.—Swift, I think, in one of his most misanthropic humours, says, while he execrates the human race in general, that he still loves John and Thomas.—There is something in Major Danby just the reverse of this; he would not care if John and Thomas, with whom he has been living in habits of friendly intercourse, were to be hanged to-morrow; but he is extremely solicitous for the fate of nations of which he knows not, nor is ever likely to know one individual—But even there, it is the princes and nobles of the land, for whom his solicitude is called forth; for as for *les gens du commun*, he thinks

they

they are by no means worth the attention of a man of ſenſe and fortune; and that the world was made for thoſe only, to whom chance has given the means of enjoying a good table, and certain comforts and conveniences of life, for which he has a very decided reliſh.

Of courſe the preſent arrangements in France are very obnoxious to him; and he collects round him a little band of minor politicians, who have an high opinion of his ſagacity, and who have adopted, from Mr. Burke, under his auſpices, the opinion, that if ſome fortunate event, (ſuch as the combination of crowned heads) does not reſtore to the French their former government, there will be a blank in that portion of the map of Europe that *was* France.

The terrors for the lives of the royal family, which theſe perſons affected to entertain have now ſubſided; but the lamentations over their impriſonment, as it is termed, are become more clamorous than ever.—To unprejudiced minds, however, the conduct of the French, on the return of their ill-adviſed monarch, has certainly ſomething great and noble in it—I own I am one of thoſe who wiſh that this magnanimity of character may be followed by a ſteady and well directed purſuit of the preſent great object, the formation of a conſtitution, that, without its defects, may unite all the advantages peculiar to that of England, which, even with thoſe flaws and imperfections, is undoubtedly the beſt in the world—So far, at leaſt, it may be ſaid to deſerve that character, as it ſeems to ſecure, better than any other, two great objects diſcordant in their nature, and therefore not often very peaceful neighbours

neighbours—I mean the dignity of the ſtate, and the privileges of the people—It has not only been long our national boaſt, but admired and analized by foreigners of the moſt enlarged and enlightened underſtanding.—You will tell me, perhaps, that it is beautiful in theory, but defective in practice; and are not even the ordinances of God expoſed to a ſimilar objection?—We have, indeed, a marvellous proof that our conſtitution has inherent excellence in no common degree; when we find it, even in the days of luxury and corruption, ſo far ſufficient for all the great purpoſes of ſociety; that amidſt all our complaints, it may, I believe, be truly aſſerted, that in no age or country, has there exiſted a people, to whom general happineſs has been more fairly diſtributed, than it is among the Engliſh of the preſent day.

I believe you are ſo far gone, my dear Deſmond, in what are called (but, I think, improperly called) the *new doctrines*, that you would contest this opinion with me, were you not juſt now in a ſtate of mind that renders every other concern, but thoſe of Geraldine, indifferent to you.—I am afraid my friend's patriotiſm is ſo inert, at preſent, that he would not care if all the world were enſlaved, ſo Geraldine was but free ---However, you will recollect, that whenever you are able and willing to enter the liſts on the other ſide, I am ready to meet you with all your natural acuteneſs, and the aid of your French friends, on this ground; the general good of the Britiſh conſtitution—This, ſurely, does not leſſen, in your mind, my zeal for the happineſs of the whole human race---It does not make you ſuppoſe,

poſe, that becauſe I think our form of government good, I do not, therefore, allow, that there may be a better; nor that I am jealous leſt a neighbouring nation ſhould find that better.---At the ſame time, I am compelled to ſay, that the proceedings of the national aſſembly, ſince the death of Mirabeau, gives me too little reaſon to believe they will---I dread the want of unanimity---The want of ſome great leading mind, to collect and condenſe the patriotic intentions and views of thoſe who really wiſh only the ſalvation of their country ---The *deſpotiſm* of ſuperior ability is, after all, neceſſary; and it is the only deſpotiſm to which reaſonable beings ought to ſubmit.

Enough of politics---Now, again, to domeſtic concerns---though you give me but little hope, in the vague way in which you write of meeting you in Kent; I ſhall in a few days, ſet out on my return home. In leaving this place, after ſo long a ſtay, I regret nobody but my fair Fanny Waverly; yet, indeed, Deſmond, I am not in love with her. I ſhall not, however, go from hence, till ſome accounts are obtained of Geraldine, which, whenever they arrive, I will tranſmit to you by the quickeſt conveyance, notwithſtanding all the confuſion of that part of your letter which talks of your addreſs. Again, I aſk you, are you acting with your uſual ingenuous confidence towards your friend?

E. BETHEL.

LET-

LETTER XVI.

TO MRS. VERNEY.

Bath, July, 18, 1791

WHERE are you, my dear ſiſter? and how ſhall I quiet my anxiety about you? While Mr. Bethel was here, I could endure it better, becauſe he had patience to liſten to my eager, and ſometimes childiſh inquiries, and to convince me, by reaſon and argument, that there was not time to hear from you, or that a thouſand circumſtances might ariſe, from winds and poſts, to delay your letters, but now that he has been gone two days, I find myſelf inſupportably wretched, and I feel my wretchedneſs the more, becauſe I am compelled to conceal it.

My brother was married yeſterday, and is departed with his bride for Bexly Hill, where his mother and mine, with your unhappy Fanny, are to meet them in a few days----I am heartily glad the ceremony is over, and this very important matter, which has ſo long occupied and agitated my mother, at length arranged. As her ſon cannot be unmarried, (which he will probably deſire to be before the end of the week, from mere fickleneſs of diſpoſition) ſhe will now fancy him ſettled in the world, and I hope be more ſettled herſelf, though I have lately learned, that Mrs. Fairfax, who, to the laſt moment, murmured internally, at giving her daughter to a commoner, (though his fortune reconciled her to the deficiency) is plotting with my mother, and making

making intereſt with all her great friends, to procure for Mr. Waverly an Iriſh peerage---- The preamble to the patent will apply with infinite propriety to my brother, when it ſpeaks of *his good ſervices to his country*—However, in the plentiful ſhowers of new coronets which daily fall, one, I doubt not, will find its way to his head; but, I ſuppoſe, a great difficulty will be to determine what title he ſhall aſſume ----Every pretty name, and words of elegant termination, in *ville*, and *wood*, and *ton*, and *ford*, and *bury*, and *wick*, ſeem to be already monopolized and engaged; but, if he were not my brother, I ſhould venture to propoſe the very *proper* appellation of Baron Weathercock---Now don't, my dear Geraldine, put on an air of diſpleaſure; I would not be flippant about theſe relations of ours, though the whole courtſhip that preceded this marriage has been to me a courſe of inexpreſſible torment) but when I reflect on their behaviour to you, find it impoſſible to command myſelf---The cold, ſupercilious inſolence of that antiquated piece of affection, Mrs Fairfax, with whom, there is no crime ſo great as being in inconvenient circumſtances; nor any recommendation ſo irreſiſtible as riches and title- -The pride and arrogance of her eldeſt daughter, now my ſiſter-in-law, who, under an affected and over acted mildneſs of manners, believes that the world was made only to do homage to her charms; and the yet more offenſive conceit of Anaſtatia, whoſe whipt ſyllabubs of ſcience ſhe compels every one to taſte and to admire, form together ſuch a group, as it is quite impoſſible not to fly from if one could.---But I, alas! am chained to it under pain of being

" put

" put into everlasting liberty"—for, I believe, were my mother to know how very much I dislike these people, she would, without much compunction, discard me, and put me to board somewhere or other on the interest of my fortune---and can I wonder at this after her behaviour to you?

You tell me, however, that I ought to bear whatever is inflicted by a parent's hand; and so, my dear Geraldine, I am learning as fast as I can, to check the natural impetuosity of my nature, *and smitten on one cheek, to turn the other.*---I will not indulge any of those satirical sallies that you have so often disapproved, but grow softly, sweetly sentimental, like the amiable Anastatia; and, when she is collecting round her all the men in the room (whether old or young, ugly or handsome, fools or wits) by the pretty languishing airs she gives herself, and totally neglecting every one else, with a rude indifference, as to their opinions, which is often extremely shocking; I will very humbly take my station behind her, and study those inimitable graces which render her so attractive.---She treats me like an insignificant child---and sometimes in the drawling quality tone, which she affects, speaking in the roof of her mouth as if she had lost her palate, she calls me poor, dear little Fanny!---Certainly I have not twenty thousand pounds as she has---nor have I a genius to write charades, songs and sonnets---nor to act plays, and read in public.---I hope, however, you don't think I say all this from envy, for I assure you, that with her humble three thousand pounds, and inferior advantages of every kind, poor, dear, little Fanny would not

change with the accomplished Anastatia.—I never seemed much worth her notice in any way, not even an object of her contemptuous pity, till Mr. Bethel shewed me so much friendly attention, and was so much with me. —Mr. Bethel is, you know, related to the Fairfax family, and though it is well understood that he does not intend to marry again, and is, on account of his two children, a man whom Miss Anastatia would not accept of, yet could she not bear the preference he has always shewn me; and has sometimes been unable to repress her indignation at his want of taste.—Since he has been gone, she has perceived the dejection of my spirits, and whenever she has had an opportunity has affected to condole with me on the departure of my *sage lover*—and *my disappointment*.—It is in such conversation, if conversation it may be called, that I am to pass the tedious days of the next month, with the new married couple, and their relations and acquaintance.—Oh! Geraldine, why cannot I dedicate these days to you?

Mr. Bethel is gone back to his house in Kent; he told me some time before the cruel event of your being sent for to France, that his friend Desmond was, he believed, coming to Bath: but the most unaccountable circumstance of my mother's suspicions being excited about him, has, as I gather from Mr. Bethel's hints, entirely put an end to that project———and he is now gone, his friend knows not whither; but he says, most probably into the North of England (where he has many connexions) for the rest of the Summer.

I own

I own I regret, though perhaps I ought rather to rejoice at, not seeing him here; but do not fancy, my dear sister, that this wish has any thing to do with that partiality for Desmond, which I was once simple enough to indulge, and partly to avow—No predilection of that sort can last long, after a conviction of its never being returned, and I must have the most perfect conviction of that, in regard to Mr. Desmond, whose heart is certainly devoted to another—though who that other is, it is better, perhaps, for neither of us to enquire.

The idle rumours that had been spread on that subject, are now dying away.——Other stories, equally gratifying to the curious malignity of the people, who call themselves the world, have succeeded; and except some sarcasms on the part of Mrs Fairfax—some affected concern on that of Miss Anastatia, and some airs of consequential and mysterious apprehension from the new Mrs. Waverly, I have heard nothing about Desmond's Welch expedition, on which you will therefore, I hope, make yourself easy.

One of the stories that for some days engrossed the conversation of the Bath circles, till it was superceded yesterday by the splendid wedding of Mr. Waverly, was the sad calamity that has befallen poor Miss Elford; you know, I believe, that six or eight weeks since, she departed from hence in order to make her usual Summer tour among her illustrious friends, for the last time before her marriage; and having staid a week with one friend, and a week with another, and ten days with a third, her lover, Dr. M'Dougal, was to have

met her at the moſt northern of theſe viſits, and with no other guard, "ſave her own purity"—ſhe was to entruſt herſelf to him to go into Scotland, where his family reſide, and where ſhe was to have become Mrs. M'Dougal.

As none of thoſe friends, with whom ſhe formerly correſponded, heard from her, they concluded that theſe arrangements were proſperouſly ſucceeding; and within theſe ten or fourteen days, they have been looking with impatience for an account of the celebration at Edinburgh of theſe happy nuptials—When ſuddenly a report prevails among the acquaintance of the Doctor, that on his arrival four or five weeks ſince, at the ſeat of his Father's, from whence he was to have met his future bride at York, he received the very unexpected intelligence, that an uncle who had been many years in the Weſt-Indies, where he had a wife and a ſon, and from whoſe riches no expectations were therefore formed, had buried both within the courſe of eighteen months, and at length followed them himſelf, leaving about forty thouſand pounds between Dr. M'Dougal and his ſiſter, a widow, not young, and without children—ſo that it was probable the Doctor would poſſeſs the whole.—In conſequence of this accumulation of good fortune, report goes on to ſay, that Miſs Elford has loſt her admirer, who now feels it unneceſſary to unite himſelf to a woman whom he does not love, in order to forward his intereſt in his profeſſion—and that the deſerted damſel, in the laſt deſpair at this diſappointment, cannot bear to ſhew herſelf in a place which ſhe left with ſuch

ſuch very different hopes, but has hid herſelf and her blaſted expectations in ſome remote part of England.

It is at once amuſing and mortifying, to remark the ſecret pleaſure with which the *ſoi-diſant* friends of poor Miſs Elford ralate this.—The day before Mr. Waverly's marriage, an aſſembly, chiefly, conſiſting of the tabbies, who are the delight of my mother and Mrs. Fairfax, was held at the houſe of the latter; and while amid their cards, this fertile ſubject was introduced, I could not but ſmile at, while I regret, the fallacy of profeſſed friendſhip, and the wonderful malignity of human nature.—The good fortune of Dr. M'Dougal, raiſed all their ſpleen.—Yet I could ſee that they ſecretly rejoiced, that their "worthy friend," Miſs Elford, was not to ſhare it, while as if to revenge her cauſe, they loaded the poor Doctor with every abuſive epithet which their fertile malice could ſuggeſt—and with the moſt fulſome affectation of pity towards the deſerted Ariadne, they expreſſed a terrible abhorrence of the cruelty of this modern Theſeus; who had, as one of them affirmed, left her in a dreary part of Scotland, where he had appointed to meet her; but where, inſtead of himſelf, ſhe was ſaluted by a cold letter, taking leave of her for ever—part of which letter this well-informed gentlewoman even repeated.

I obſerved, that during this converſation, my mother, who in ſuch ſort of confabulations is ſeldom backward, was unuſually reſerved—ſhe ſaid it *might* be all very true, for ſhe had no intelligence from *dear* Philadelphia to the contrary; but ſtill ſhe was willing to

hope

hope for the beſt.—You muſt agree with me, my dear ſiſter, that my mother is not very apt to keep to herſelf her knowledge on any topic, particularly when ſhe fancies, or knows, ſhe poſſeſſes, on the ſubject in diſcuſſion, more information than thoſe who are ſpeaking of it—Nevertheleſs, I am convinced, that ſhe on this knows a great deal more than ſhe chuſes to tell; and has, for once, ſome reaſon for ſilence, ſo ſtrong as to conquer her deſire of giving her knowledge to her admiring auditors.—How ſhe ſhould come by this information, indeed, I cannot gueſs; or why, if ſhe correſponds with her dear Philadelphia, it ſhould all of a ſudden be kept ſo profound a ſecret—But conjectures on this head are uſeleſs, nor is it a matter that much deſerves the trouble of inveſtigation.—My mother, perhaps, having changed her boſom friend (for one, of what the common people call a crony, ſhe muſt always have) has a mind to diſmiſs her quietly, and not by joining in any ſarcaſm againſt her, irritate her (eſpecially in theſe very irritable moments) to diſcloſe the purport of theſe long conferences which ſhe and Miſs Elford uſed to have together; during which, I believe, there was no tranſaction of her paſt life that ſhe did not relate to this dear Philadelphia; nor any meaſures for her future conduct, in regard to her family, that ſhe was not ſuffered to dictate.—The elderly ladies have a mortal averſion to great intimacy between two girls—and many have been the chidings and remonſtrances I have endured, for walking and whiſpering and gigling with the young people of my own age, who have happened to be thrown in my way.—'Twas

for

for no good, my mother uſed to ſay, that theſe violent intimacies ſubſiſted—I wonder what good ever ariſes from the caballing of a dowager, and an old ſpinſter.---I dare ſay, if theſe conferences could be fairly related, thoſe of the Miſſes would be found the moſt innocent of the two; for theirs, I believe, generally turns upon the topic of gaiety, vanity and love---and thoſe of the ladies of a certain age, upon hatred, malice, and all uncharitableneſs.

Ah! my deareſt ſiſter, while I am writing all this where are you? Your ſhort incoherent letter* informed me, indeed, that you were ſafe as far as Rouen; but what has happened ſince? --I tremble at every ſentence of French news; and the people among whom I live are ſuch inveterate and decided enemies to the revolution, that they exaggerate with malicious delight, all the miſchief they hear of, and repreſent the place whither you are going as a ſcene of anarchy, famine, and bloodſhed ---I have heard ſtories that I am ſure are improbable, and I hope impoſſible--- and when my mother, the other day, was relating one of them "on the authority of a dear friend, of a dear friend of hers, a Lord ſomebody, juſt come through Paris in his way from Italy"---I could not help ſaying---"And you believe all this Madam?"

"Believe it girl?---yes to be ſure---I not only believe, but know it."----

"And yet, Madam, it was at ſuch a time, and conſigned to ſuch a man as your ſon-in-law, Verney, that you inſiſted upon ſending your daughter, Geraldine, to Paris."

* Which does not appear.

I don't

I don't know that I ever recollect seeing my mother so angry, nor can I guess when her indignation for my impertinence would have subsided—if luckily for me, the upholsterer had not that moment entered with the patterns of some linens and chintz of which the new furniture at Bexley Hill is to consist.—Her daughter Geraldine, and her daughter Fanny, were in a moment equally forgotten; and she sent in a great hurry for her son to call a council with Miss Fairfax on this important point.——A very serious debate ensued, which, as Mr. Waverly was of the party, I knew would not very speedily end: and before they could settle the first question, whether the chintz furniture of the west bed chamber should be lined with sky blue, or grass green, I made my escape.

I direct this letter to the care of the banker at Paris, who Mr. Bethel assures me will know your abode there, and carefully convey it to you.———Oh! how anxiously I long to hear from you———how painfully does my imagination dwell on the difficulties you may encounter, unprotected as you are; yet how decidedly convinced I am, that the greatest evil that can befall you would be meeting with your husband.

It is with a bleeding heart, my dear Geraldine, I say this; and, with a bleeding heart I await your letters, which heaven grant may bring me better accounts of you than my affrighted fancy suggests.

May heaven protect you, and all you love.

FANNY WAVERLY.

LET-

LETTER XVII.

TO MISS WAVERLY.

Meudon, Auguſt 16th, 1791.

ONCE more, my deareſt ſiſter, I have again a tranſient reſpite, after ſuch a ſeries of mental and bodily ſufferings as I have not in my former letters*, very fully inſiſted upon, becauſe it was enough for me to endure them, without tearing to pieces, by the deſcription, the ſenſible heart of my Fanny.

I will now, however, when I can look back upon theſe ſituations and ſenſations with ſome degree of calmneſs, recapitulate briefly my little travels, the account of which muſt have been broken and disjointed, by the hurried and incoherent letters I wrote from Rouen and Paris.

I need not remind you of the ſtate of languor in which I landed at Dieppe, after what was, they told me, a quick paſſage of ſeventeen hours.—I expected, the next morning, to have ſeen ſome ſymptons, in the town, of the miſery, which I was aſſured, the revolution had occaſioned; but every thing is the ſame as it was when we paſſed this way to England, ſix years ſince, except that, inſtead of proceſſions of *les Carmes déchauſſés, ou les Pères de l'Aſſomption*, we now ſee ſmall par-

* Which do not appear.

ties of armed citizens parading the ſtreets, at certain hours, as they go to their exerciſe, or to relieve the guard; much better looking men, and much fitter to be entruſted with the care of their town than the miſerable looking, half-ſtarved ſoldiers, that I remember to have ſeen exerciſing on the walls when we were here before, who ſeemed likely, from actual want, to pillage, rather than protect the coaſt—Theſe, on the contrary, are all men armed voluntarily to defend themſelves, their families, and their property; and, in a ſhort time, when the advantages of freedom are felt, and the diſadvantages of obtaining it by force forgotten, theſe aſſociations will be as Smollett deſcribes his countrymen, in one of the moſt beautiful odes that ever was written.—

"With hearts reſolv'd, and hands prepar'd,
The bleſſings they enjoy—to guard."

That theſe bleſſings are not yet fully felt, ſeems to be the only complaint that the enemies to the freedom of France can alledge againſt it; as if, immediately after ſuch a change, all could ſubſide into order, and "every man ſit down under his own vine and his own fig-tree."

We know, from daily experience, that even in a private family, a change in its œconomy or its domeſtics, diſturbs the tranquillity of its members for ſome time—It muſt ſurely then happen, to a much greater degree, in a great nation, whoſe government is ſuddenly diſſolved by the reſolution of the people; and which,

which in taking a new form, has ſo many jarring intereſts to conciliate—A country too, where genuine patriotiſm having been always a prohibited ſentiment, every man, whoſe property or talents give him weight, has been ſo long accuſtomed to conſult his own intereſt, that the ſacrifices to be made for general good appear too difficult to the individual, and he ſhrinks, from private inconvenience, which is certain and immediate, when remote though general benefit is to be obtained by it.

We began our land journey the next day, ſave one, after our landing—Some little difficulties occurred about the number of poſt-horſes that were to draw our carriage, on account of ſix perſons being in it; though, of thoſe ſix, three were infants in lap (theſe arrangements, which ſeem ſo ſtrange and teizing to the Engliſh, are, I imagine, a remnant of former deſpotiſm, which gave the profits of the poſts to government at its own diſcretion).

The country is very fine around Rouen Hills, reſembling the high downs in Suſſex, ariſe immediately around it, but the proſpect from the ſummit of that to which the road led us, is infinitely more beautiful than any I ever ſaw—The Seine winding through a lovely vale of great extent, and the port of Rouen crowded with veſſels—the town and ſuburbs—the old and magnificent cathedral——all embоſomed with trees, with the fineſt meadows beyond them, and an infinite number of *châteaux* ſcattered through the whole landſcape, render it altogether ſuch a view as I never ſaw equaled

equaled in England; but, indeed, I have not, in my own country, been a great traveller.

On the ſummit of the hill, and juſt as the road led along a chalky hollow, which had been cut to eaſe the ſteepneſs of the acclivity, we were met by a proceſſion of prieſts, chanting ſolemnly in Latin, and, as I apprehend, carrying the hoſt to ſome ſick perſon ——They were preceded by a ſmall party of the national guard, in their uniform and under arms——The prieſts, one of whom carried a large crucifix of ſilver, gilt, were to the number of eighteen or twenty, all men in the flower of their age, and remarkably well-looking—I ordered the poſtillions to ſtop, and my ſervants to pull off their hats, while the proceſſion paſſed, which had in it a ſolemnity particularly affecting; as the dirge they were ſinging in excellent voices, fell, or was reſumed in aweful reſponſes echoing along the hollow cliffs of chalk ——The mournful muſic was in uniſon with the melancholy temper of my mind, and I involuntarily ſhed tears, as I apoſtrophiſed the departing ſpirit, to whom theſe religious men were carrying the ſacred wafer, which, in their opinion, ſecures its future happineſs ——"Poor trembling being!" ſaid I, "thou art, perhaps, about to quit, reluctantly, a world, to which ſome tender connexion, ſome ſcene of promiſed happineſs attaches thee!——With reluctant and fearful heart, thou wilt receive what is to be, in thy opinion, a *paſſport* to the boſom of thy God! ——while I, a wretched wanderer, in a wretched world, would moſt willingly exchange ſituations with thee; and with thy faith

faith and thy profpects, lay down, even with pleafure, a life which, according to the courfe of nature, may be very long, according to all prefent probability, muft be very miferable."

Thefe thoughts occured as the figures flowly, and with down-caft eyes, paffed clofe to my coach———The proceffion was finifhed by another fmall party of the national guard ———" All religion, however," faid I, " is not abolifhed in France——they told me it was defpifed and trampled on; and I never enquired, as every body ought to do, when fuch affertions are made—Is all this true ?"

As we proceeded, nothing could appear more beautiful than the extenfive plains of Normandy, which, under all the difadvantages of bad cultivation, and the tumults exifting thefe laft two years, which are certainly inimical to the labour of the hufbandman, do, literally, laugh and fing———This appearance of plenty would convince me of the truth of what Mr. Defmond once affured me, if I ever could doubt of facts which I hear from fo accurate and candid a judge; I mean that the deficiency of bread, *(la diffette du pain)* which, in eighty-nine and ninety, was fo feverely felt at Paris, was artificial, and created by thofe, who not only had the power to monopolize for their own profit, but others who had it in view to reduce the people by famine to obedience—— to turn their thoughts from the acquifition of freedom, to the prefervation, on any terms, of exiftence.

It has been affirmed, and never contradicted, that the civil magiftrates of Paris, and the intendants of the provinces, had caufed the corn to be cut down in the green blade

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——The effect of this atrocious wickedneſs, was, however, exactly the reverſe of that which was intended—The tranſaction was diſcovered, and can we wonder it was reſented?—The wretched projectors fell victims to the indignation of the people; and the cry of "du pain, du pain, pour nous & pour nos enfans,*" was loudly urged in the ears of royalty, when royalty was believed to have encouraged ſuch atrocity.

While humanity drops her tears at the ſad ſtories of thoſe individuals who fell the victims of popular tumult ſo naturally excited, pity cannot throw over theſe tranſactions a veil thick enough to conceal the tremendous decree of juſtice, which, like "the hand writing upon the wall," will be ſeen in colours of blood, and however regretted, muſt ſtill be acknowledged as the hand of juſtice.

This excurſion into the field of politics, where, for the moſt part, only thiſtles can be gathered, and where we, you know, have always been taught that women ſhould never advance a ſtep, may, perhaps, excite your ſurprize——You will poſſibly wonder that, under the preſſure of thoſe evils which ſo lately ſurrounded me, I ſhould, for a moment, find my ſpirits enough diſengaged to enter into diſquiſitions ſo little attractive—— The truth is, that whenever I am not ſuffering under any immediate alarm, my mind, poſſeſſing more elaſticity than I once thought poſſible, recovers itſelf enough to look at the objects around me, and even to contemplate with ſome degree of compoſure, my own preſent circumſtances, and the proſpect before

* Bread, bread, for us and our children.

me,

me, which would a few, a very few months since, have appeared quite insupportable.

It is to my sister, to my second self I write, and from her I do not fear such a remark as was made on some French woman of fashion, (who I cannot now recollect) who, being separated from her husband, changed her religion to that (whatever it was) which he did not profess——" She has done it," said a wit, "that she might never meet her husband either in this world or the next" ——Thus it might, perhaps, be said, that I determine never to think on any article (even on these, whereon my age and sex might exempt me from thinking at all) like Mr. Verney; and therefore, as he is, he knows not why a very furious aristocrat, that with no better reason, become democrat.

But I do assure you, my Fanny, that however ridiculous Mr. Verney's adherence may seem to the cause of persons of whom he knows nothing but their vices and their follies, my inconsequential opinion would not be put in the other scale, were I not convinced, that every principle, all that we owe to God, our fellow creatures and ourselves, is clearly on the other side the question.

This must be from conviction, for it cannot be from the prejudice of education—— *we* were always brought up as if we were designed for wives to the Vicars of Bray—My father, indeed, would not condescend to suppose that our sentiments were worth forming or consulting; and with all my respect for his memory, I cannot help recollecting that he was a very Turk in principle, and hardly allowed women any pretensions to souls,

ſouls, or thought them worth more care than he beſtowed on his horſes, which were to look ſleek, and do their paces well.

As to our mother, I am afraid our filial duty, highly as I venerate the principle, cannot conceal from us, that ſhe ſuffered, in her department, no ſentiments to be adopted which did not ſquare with the ſubſtantial rules of domeſtic policy; for every ſingle man of large fortune, though decrepid with age, or diſtorted by the hand of Nature, though half an ideot from his birth, or rendered worſe than an ideot by debauchery, we were taught to throw out encouragement; and, I really believe, if the wandering Jew, or the yellow dwarf, or any other fabled being of hideous deſcription, could have been ſent on earth to have perſonified men of eight or ten thouſand a year, we ſhould have found it difficult to have eſcaped being married to them, if they had offered *good ſettlements*.

Riches and high birth—(the latter rather becauſe it generally includes the former, than for its own ſake) riches and high birth were ever the moſt certain recommendations to the favor of my mother——Merit unattended by theſe advantages, we were always taught to ſhun; ſhe knew that, unleſs we were blinded by early prejudice, it would force itſelf irreſiſtibly on unadulterated minds; and againſt ſuch impreſſions ſhe was conſtantly on her guard.

With what vigilance did ſhe contrive, at Bexley Hill, to exclude from all our parties every young man who had nothing elſe to recommend him, than his deſerving to be noticed.—I remember, when a regiment of horſe

was

was quartered for some time at Wells, how eagerly she solicited the company of those of the officers, who were reputed to be men of fortune, while, if any subaltern, of inferior expectations, was introduced to her table, how cold, how reluctant were her civilities!

That *I* have been most unhappily the victim of this mercenary spirit, I do not, however, mean to make matter of reproach to my mother—Happiness, in her estimation, consists in being visited by the opulent; in giving and receiving good dinners; in having at Bath, or in London, the reputation of having fashionable parties, and very full rooms; of curtsying, at church, to all the best dressed part of the congregation; and being looked upon as a very sensible woman, and one who knows the world; of being appealed to by the yellow admirals and gouty generals, as a person of great sagacity in cases, whether of medicine, or cards, or anecdote; and of being considered as a perfect judge of etiquette; and a woman of the highest respectability.

Now, as these circumstances do, in her idea, constitute the *summum bonum*, can you wonder that she endeavoured to procure their certain possession for us?—That she has failed, at least, in regard to me, is not to be imputed to her as an error; her judgment was originally wrong; the fault of the head rather than the heart.——She could not have succeeded, because, had Mr. Verney's self-indulgences left me all these blessings, on which my mother sets so high a value, I should, if I had been compelled to have entered

entered into their routine, have been infinitely more miſerable than I am now.

But to go on with the brief hiſtory of travels, which I have hitherto only related in a vague and disjointed way, I may as well take up the word miſerable, with which I concluded the laſt ſentence, and tell you, that miſerable, very miſerable I was at Rouen: not, however, from finding the country—"*en feu & en ſang*,"* as I had been aſſured I ſhould do, by ſome emigrants with whom I converſed at Brighthelmſtone; but from my own ſad reflections, and the uncertainty of what was to be my deſtiny on my arrival at Paris.

Far from finding my approach to this city (Rouen) impeded by any of the popular confuſion of which we have been told ſo much, I muſt give you a deſcription of the ſcene.

It was about half paſt nine o'clock, when we entered the long double avenue of elms, which begins above a mile from the town. —The day had been very warm, and the evening was deliciouſly ſerene.—The moon, nearly at the full, was reflected in long lines of radiance on the ſilver boſom of the Seine, which is here much broader and clearer than at Paris; and the oars of boats, going up the river, were heard at intervals, as they daſhed the ſparkling water, mingled with the ſomewhat mournful, yet not unpleaſing, ſound of the ſailors on the quay above, drawing up their anchors to depart.—As we advanced, the noiſe of the poſtillions, who delight in cracking their whips and hooting as they approach a town,

* In blood and fire—or, as we ſay, under fire and ſword.

interrupted,

interrupted, but could not drown the enlivening notes of the fifes, clarinets, and organs of the Savoyards, to which two or three parties were gaily dancing by the road side, while many others were walking under the trees, enjoying the beauty of the night.—The nearer we approached the town, the more numerous and well dreſſed were the groups we perceived, till near the former barrier, it might be juſtly called a crowd who ſeemed to have no object but the pleaſure of a gay walk by moon-light after a hot day—"And this," cried I, as I ſurveyed them, "this is a ſpecimen of univerſal national miſery—of the fierce and ſanguinary democracy ſo pathetically lamented by Mr. Burke!"

The next morning I received from the French merchant, to whom Mr. Bethel gave me letters, every attention which I could have claimed on a long acquaintance; he regulated every thing for our future journey in the way, leaſt likely to occaſion fatigue to me, and after reſting at Rouen one day, we again went forward towards Paris.

Had my mind been leſs cruelly occupied by the certainty of preſent evils, or could I have looked forward with more calmneſs to the ſcenes that awaited me at Paris, I ſhould have contemplated, with peculiar pleaſure, the uncommon charms of the country that borders the Seine near Vernon—a town remarkably dirty and melancholy, ſituated in a ſpot of which imagination cannot conceive the beauty.

Around Rouen it is very fine; but, perhaps, as I had paſſed that country before, I

was

was leſs ſtruck with it now, and as I then travelled what is called the upper way to Paris, I did not go through Vernon.

The Seine, along whoſe banks the road lies for many miles, is here very broad and very rapid——broken by ſeveral beautiful little iſlands, where the willow dips its trembling leaves into the current, and mingled with the darker ſhade of alders, the poplar riſes in luxuriant ſpires above.—On the oppoſite ſide of the river there are coppices edging the water, or green lines of meadow ground—hills reſembling the Southern Downs of England ariſe beyond theſe————with here and there a ſcattered vineyard, the firſt I had ſeen in France—But a little beyond Vernon there are other hills of the moſt extraordinary forms I ever remarked—they appear, at the diſtance from which I ſurveyed them, like immenſe circular maſſes of ſtone or marble, piled on each other, or aſſembled in rows, as if ſome ſupernatural beings of extraordinary ſtrength had thrown them there —The ſingularity of their outline gives to the whole landſcape, for ſome miles, a very romantic appearance, and the road from which it is ſurveyed is equally wild and picturesque—for it lies under a ridge of high chalk rock, beneath which are a few cottages, partly formed of the rock itſelf, and half hid with vines.

You will wonder, perhaps, that in the ſtate of mind I was, as I paſſed through this country, I ſhould be able to give ſo much attention to it as to make out even this ſlight deſcription—But I find, that from a habit of ſuffering,

suffering, the mind acquires the power to suffer; and, if it resists at all, becomes every year less acutely sensible; it must at least be so with me, for I now look forward with melancholy composure to events that appear inevitable, of which the bare idea a few years, or even a few months ago, would have driven me, I think, to frenzy.—I see no end of my calamities but in the grave——and having in a great measure ceased to hope, it were ridiculous to fear—Fate can have nothing worse in store for me than separation from those I love, embittered by poverty and contempt—Long lingering years, varied only by different shades of wretchedness, is all my prospect.—Torn for ever from my dearest connections, and doomed to be the unresisting victim of a man, whose conduct is a continual disgrace to himself, his family, and his country.

"Regretter ce ceux qu'on aime, est un bien en comparaison de vivre avec ce qu'on hait"—says de la Rochefaucault.—I do not hate Mr. Verney—God forbid I should; but yet I own his late conduct, in regard to Monsieur de Romagnecourt, and other circumstances that have accidentally come to my knowledge, have raised in me such a dread of him, that there is no humiliation to which I had not rather submit, than that of considering myself as his slave.——Yet to repeat the words of a pathethic French poem, I was reading yesterday,

"Tel j'étois, tel je suis encore,
"Ne respirant que pour soufrir."

But

But I have ſtrangely wandered from the narrative I undertook, to give more connectedly than you can gather it from my former letters.

I paſs over the reſt of my journey from Vernon to Mante, where we remained one night; and, in which, if there was any thing remarkable, I did not ſee it—for as I approached Paris my ſpirits ſunk, and every league became more and more depreſſed—Yet what I felt was the calm deſperation of incurable calamity, and not thoſe ſudden paroxyſms of anxiety which are yielded to, when hope repreſents the poſſibility of redreſs; and the agitated mind, in the moſt acute moments of ſorrow, looks round for ſuccour.—I had nothing to hope ----and what I then had to fear was of a nature ſo dreadful and ſo peculiar, that I hardly dared truſt my mind with its contemplation.

At length we arrived at Paris, and I ſaw myſelf in l'Hotel de Moſcovie; for though Mr. Verney's letter had ordered me to take up my abode at the magnificent hotel of his illuſtrious friend, Monſieur le Duc de Romagnecourt, I had, in this inſtance, and by the advice of Mr. Bethel, determined to diſobey him—I had written from Dieppe to Mr. Verney, to ſay I ſhould await his orders at l'Hotel de Muſcovie; but there were no letters there for me, or had any perſon been there enquiring after me.————As I was extremely fatigued, I determined, though it was yet only early in the evening, to do no more that night, than announce my arrival to the banker, to whom Mr. Bethel, and his

rfiend,

friend, had given me letters; and deferring till the next day, every determination as to a future plan, to endeavour to procure some repose to my children and myself——— In this I succeeded so far, as to see them all well the following morning, and to find my own spirits rather more tranquil than I could expect, when, at nine o'clock, I received a note from Monsieur Bergasse, to whom my letters were addressed, saying that he would wait on me at ten.

I could not avoid explaining to him, though it was with extreme reluctance, the orders I had received from Mr. Verney.———I saw at once that he was startled at them, and believed that no husband who either regarded his wife or his honour, would have given such directions.———He informed me, however, that though the Duc de Romagnecourt had quitted Paris some time before the flight of the King, and that the splendid preparations making for his return from England, had been countermanded; yet it was likely that Mr. Verney, who might not have received my letter from Dieppe, had sent to the Duke's house his instructions how I should proceed ———since the political changes that had happened after his first desiring me to meet him in France, had probably changed his intentions in regard to me and to himself.

To the Hotel de Romagnecourt, therefore, Mr. Bergasse was so good as to go for me; he very soon returned with a letter from Mr. Verney, directing me to remain there till his arrival, and informing me that he was going for a very short time to the neighbourhood of Avignon,

Avignon, with his dear friends Meſſieurs de Romagnecourt, de Bellizet and de Boiſbelle; the former and latter of whom had juſt rejoined him———and that, in the mean time, I ſhould find that every accommodation had been directed by the Duke to await me at Paris.

I could ſee by the whole turn of this letter, which was not indeed written with much art, that Mr. Verney had calculated that the money he remitted to me for my journey, could do no more than defray the expences of it; and that on my arrival at Paris, neceſſity muſt conquer the repugnance I might feel at being thus made over, as an inhabitant of the houſe of Monſieur de Romagnecourt.

This gentleman alſo had taken the trouble to write to me; and with many extravagant expreſſions of attachment and admiration, expreſſed his regret at my cruelty in not deigning to accompany him, and his delight at my charming condeſcenſion in coming at all——— His *ardent* hopes that this, his letter, would find me in entire poſſeſſion of his houſe at Paris, where he had given directions that his carriages and ſervants ſhould be at my command; and of all of which he beſought me to conſider myſelf as ſole miſtreſs.

Oh! Fanny, what would have become of your unhappy ſiſter, but for the kind interpoſition of Mr. Bethel. ———Thus forced by my mother's inhumanity into a foreign country, without money or friends, where could I have found refuge for myſelf and my poor little ones, whoſe natural protector moſt unnaturally

naturally consigns their mother to a destiny more terrible than the most humble poverty.

Good God! is it possible that I am writing thus of the father of these children, for whose sake only I endure life?———I dare not trust my pen with another line on that subject———

"Oh! that way madness lies; let me shun that,
No more of that"———*

The determination I at length came to was, to remain at the hotel de Moscovie, where I found very good accommodations, till I heard again from the unfortunate man whose property I am———but on no account to meet him, if I could avoid it, till he had relinquished every idea of compelling me, either with him or alone, to become an inmate in the house of Monsieur de Romagnecourt.—The manner in which I perceived Monsieur Bergasse heard the name of that nobleman spoken of, confirmed, too certainly, all the fears I had of Mr. Verney's motive for cultivating an intimacy, from which most husbands would have recoiled———and, if contempt and abhorrence of his principles, could engender hatred against the father of George, of Harriet, and of William, surely I should be justified in feeling it.

Oh! how impossible it is to help relapsing continually into a topic so heavily pressing on the heart——— Let me, however, close the detail of my wandering, till I settled here.—I remarked, in the little time I had to remark

* Shakespeare.

any thing, that I never saw so many people, of all ages, scarred and seamed with the small-pox, as I had observed since my being at Paris.——I was told that it was owing to the inveterate prejudices inculcated by the priests, who even now persisted in teaching, that to disarm this cruel disease of its malignity, was to offend heaven, which intended that it should blind, cripple, or render spectacles of horror, those whose lives it spared——I enquired if it was now in Paris——I was answered that it was always in Paris.——Terrified at this intelligence, I sent to my friend Monsieur Bergasse, entreating him to look out for an house at some of the villages around it——He very obligingly undertook the enquiry, and on Friday informed me, that he had heard of a *maison burgois*,* but well furnished, and fit to be immediately inhabited, at Meudon.——I entreated him instantly to engage it - —— he did so; and, on my arrival, I found it infinitely more comfortable than I expected.—— Here then I am, my Fanny, waiting in anxiety, but not with impatience, Mr. Verney's further orders——With sensations very different *your* letters are expected by your affectionate

GERALDINE.

Have you heard from Mr. Desmond?—— I thought he would before now have written to me.

* Houses in France were, till now distinguished by "maisons bourgois," fit only for citizens or inferior people——and *maisons noble*, belonging to men of rank, or *les terres titres.*

Mr.

Mr. Bethel, I hope, is ſtill at Bath.——— I conclude I might by this time ſend my compliments to our newly acquired ſiſter; but probably ſhe will readily diſpenſe with that ceremony.——Do you recollect in the novel of Sidney Biddulph (one of the beſt that we have in our language) how poor Sidney is treated in her adverſity by the haughty wife of her brother, Sir George? Perhaps there is a little ſimilarity in our deſtinies———But *I* have *no Faulkland!*

LETTER XVIII.

TO MISS WAVERLY.

Meudon, Sept. 7, 1791.

YOU ask me, my sister, for a further description of my abode, if that can be called an abode where I am only a transient lodger, and from whence I every moment expect to receive a summons to depart—for Alas!—I know not whither!

You ask, too, my motives for prefering this place, which in my last letter I told you was melancholy, to Versailles or St. Cloud, where I could equally have the advantage of gardens—or to Chaillot, Passy, or some other pleasant village, more immediately adjoining to Paris.—My dear Fanny, I prefer this place, *because it is* melancholy, and *because it is retired.*

Here, as I wander over the deserted gardens, I seldom meet any body but the men, who keep them in something like order, and who do not even look back at me, or mark my solitary walks.

There are at Meudon, two palaces, one of very ancient structure and long, quite uninhabited—the other built, or at least repaired, by the Dauphin, father of the present King which Louis the XVIth has occasionally inhabited, and which contains many handsome apartments—they both stand in the same garden, which has never received any modern improvements—and in

in many parts of it the borders are deſtitute of their former ornaments; and, of many of the trees and ſhrubs that remain,

> " The boughs are moſs'd with age,
> And high tops bald with dry antiquity."*

Adjoining to the moſt ancient of theſe royal houſes, which terminates a long avenue and a large court, is a chapel with an arched gateway, leading to it from the garden, and ſurrounded by paved paſſages and high cloiſters—and it is on ſome broken ſteps, that near theſe almoſt ruinous buildings, lead from the lower to the upper garden, I frequently take my penſive ſeat and mark the ſun ſinking away above the high coppices that are beyond the gardens; (and I imagine from a part of them, though I have not yet ventured to wander ſo far.)——A yet more cheerful ſeat I have found for my leſs melancholy moods, on the wall of the terrace on the oppoſite ſide, which looks down immediately on the village of Meudon—where, among its pleaſant-looking houſes, they ſtill point out the habitation of the celebrated *Rabelais*.—— As I never enjoyed, becauſe, perhaps, I do not underſtand his works, I contemplate it not with ſo much pleaſure as it would afford thoſe who can admire them.—Of late, my Fanny, I have found this view too *riante*, and have adhered almoſt every evening after I have put my little ones to bed, to the old ſteps——where I hear no ſounds but the bell of the convent of Capuchins (which is on a high ridge of land, concealed by trees about half a mile from the old palace)

* Shakeſpeare.

palace) or the wind murmuring hollow through the iron gratings and ſtone paſſages that lead round the chapel, from whoſe windows of painted glaſs I can fancy the ſullen genius of ſuperſtition peeps forth, ſighing over his departed power, in melancholy reſponſes to the ſummons, that call the monks to their evening devotions.

I often meet, as I come through the avenue, ſome of theſe venerable fathers, who, with ſlow ſteps, and downcaſt eyes, their cowl frequently covering their faces, and their arms croſſed upon their breaſts, paſs me---apparently ſo occupied by their holy meditations, as not to hold an inſignificant being like me, worth even a ſalutation.

But why ſhould that ſeem diſcourteous, which is probably a part of their religion? I ought alſo to conſider, that beſides the gloomy auſterity of their order, they are now, perhaps, more auſtere, becauſe they are unhappy——They believe their altars are violated, and their profeſſion rendered odious.---They fear their ſubſiſtence may fail them, and that they may be turned out into a world which is ſeldom too kind to the unfortunate, and is likely to treat *their* misfortunes with ridicule inſtead of pity.---I have obſerved, within this laſt week, one among them who ſeems more reſtleſsly wretched than the reſt---I remark him every day paſs by the windows of the houſe where I live, with a baſket in one hand, and a ſtaff in the other———his hood always concealing his face, and his tall figure bending as if weighed down by calamity.

After

After the morning duties are over, I see him glide among the trees in the garden, or among the vines that clothe the declivity towards the village; more than once he has come forth of an evening from the cloistered passages of the chapel, and, with solemn step, crossed near me, to attend the last offices of the evening, when he hears the bell from the convent echo among the winding colonades.

There is something particularly affecting to me, in beholding this solitary mourner——— whose griefs though they are probably of a different kind from mine, are possibly as poignant. —Perhaps he was once a gay and thoughtless inhabitant of the world —— He may have seen (for he does not appear to be a young man) these now deserted palaces, blazing in the splendour of a voluptuous court—Among its vanished glories, he may have lost all he loved; and he has now, it may be, no other consolation than visiting in the *cimetiere* of the chapel, the stone on which time is destroying even the sepulchral memorial of this beloved object.

As I thus make out, in my imagination, his melancholy story, I shed tears; I shudder at the distress I have drawn----Oh! Fanny!---- among all the miseries of humanity, the most insupportable is surely the death of those we love; and yet how full of contradiction is the human heart---I know there are many, many evils in life to which death is infinitely preferable---I know that I myself prefer it to the continuance of such an existence as has long been mine; yet to out-live *you*, my *children*, and *one or two of my friends*, presents an idea of calamity which would deprive me of my reason.

How

How have I been led by the poor desponding Monk into this digression?—I hardly know and have not now much time to revise what I have written, as a messenger goes to Paris this evening, who is to take my letter; I return, therefore, to my subject as abruptly as I quitted it, to tell you the little that remains to be said about my house—It is just like other French houses; and its only recommendation to me is the melancholy sort of repose, and the solitary walks, which its immediate neighbourhood to the gardens of Meudon afford me.

The windows command great part of the view between this place and Paris, to which, it would be difficult for the pencil to do justice—with a pen, it were hopeless to attempt it.

The first yellow tints of Autumn are hardly stealing on the trees, encreasing, however, where they have touched them, the beauty of the foliage—The sky is delightfully serene; and a sun-set in the gardens here exceeds what I ever saw in England for warmth and brilliancy of colouring——No dew falls, even when the sun is gone, though we may call the evenings now autumnal evenings—I am generally out with my children till past seven o'clock, and after I have attended them to their beds, I still find it mild and warm enough to allow me to perform *my* vespers in the open air.

You, my Fanny—at least, till your tenderness for me taught it to you—you have never been unhappy, and have never known (O! *may* you never know) the strange and, perhaps, capricious feelings of the *irretrievably* wretched—Since I have found myself so, I have taken up a notion that I do not breathe freely, while I am within the house; and

and like the poor maniac, who wandered about in the neighbourhood of Briſtol, I fancy "that nothing is good but liberty and freſh air."

In conſequence of this ſenſation, I live all-day about the gardens; while the ſun is high, Peggy attends me with the three children, in ſome ſhady part of them; and George often amuſes himſelf with catching the little brown lizards which abound in the graſs, and among the tufts of low ſhrubs on this dry ſoil—He brings them to me———I bid him take great care not to hurt them—I explained to him, that they have the ſame ſenſe of pain as he has, and ſuffer equally under preſſure and confinement—He looks very grave, as I endeavour to impreſs this on his mind; and then gently putting them down, cries, "no! no! indeed! I will not hurt you, poor little things!"

How much a tone, a look, an almoſt imperceptible expreſſion of countenance will awaken to new anguiſh an heart always oppreſſed like mine!—As, liberating his priſoners, he ſays this—I look round on him, his ſweet ſiſter, and his baby-brother, and internally ſighing, ſay, "Oh! would I were ſure, if ever your poor mamma is torn from you, that nobody will hurt *you*, poor little things!"

What ails me, to be thus unuſually weak, this evening? I believe the heat of the day has overcome me—I will go and walk, as I did laſt night, when I have finiſhed my letter.

I ſhall probably meet my fellow ſufferer, for ſuch I am ſure he is, the ſolitary Capuchin---I have juſt ſeen him walk towards the palace garden.—Well!—and is there not ſatisfaction in beholding a being, who, whatever may have

been his misfortunes, seems to have found consolation and fortitude in religion—I have often entertained an half-formed wish that he would speak to me—perhaps his own sufferings may have taught him that tender sympathy with the sufferings of others, which is often so soothing to the sick heart, and he might speak of peace to me!

I am sadly distressed here for want of books; the few which, with such a quantity of necessary baggage, I was able to bring with me, I have now exhausted; and though my good friend, Monsieur Bergasse, has sent me some from Paris, they happen to be such as I cannot read with any pleasure——I have supposed it not impossible that the Monk might supply me from the library of his convent.

This deficiency of books has compelled me to have recourse to my pen and my pencil to beguile those hours, when my soul, sickening at the past, and recoiling from the future, would very fain lose its own mournful images in the witchery of fiction, or in some pursuit; though, alas! it is too true, that the mind will stray from the fingers; and that I cannot find, either in work or in drawing, enough employment to keep me from sad and bitter reflection.

Reason as vainly tells me, that nothing can be worth the unceasing solicitude I feel—Were it only for myself, I surely should not indulge it; nor would I magnify or dwell upon the actual and possible miseries of my destiny, but for my children!—for those I love so much better than myself!—I cannot help

help being ſenſible of ſuch agonizing anxiety as occupation cannot charm, nor reaſon conquer.

I have found, however, a melancholy delight in deſcribing theſe ſufferings—I uſually take my evening ſeat on the flight of ſteps I have deſcribed to you—Sometimes, when I am in more tranquil ſpirits, I ſketch, in my port-folio, the wild flowers and weeds that grow among the buildings where I ſit—In ſome parts, ivy holds together the broken piles of brick, from whence the cement has fallen—The ſtone-crop, and the toad-flax, cover or creep among the maſſes of disjointed marble, ſeveral ſorts of antirhinum ſtill wave their pink and purple bloſſoms along the edges of the wall; and laſt night I obſerved mingled with them, a root of the field poppy, ſtill in flower—On the qualities of this plant I fell into a reverie.—To you, my Fanny, and to you only, I entruſt the little wild ode—almoſt, indeed, an impromptu, which this contemplation produced.

ODE TO THE POPPY.

Not for the promiſe of the labor'd field,
Not for the good the yellow harveſts yield,
I bend at Ceres' ſhrine;
For dull to humid eyes appear,
The golden glories of the year;
Alas!—a melancholy worſhip's mine!

I ſhall

I hail the Goddeſs for her ſcarlet flower
Thou brilliant weed
That doſt ſo far exceed,
The richeſt gifts gay Flora can beſtow;
Heedleſs I paſs'd thee, in life's morning hour,
(Thou comforter of woe,)
'Till ſorrow taught me to confeſs thy power.

In early days when Fancy cheats,
A various wretch I wove;
Of laughing ſprings luxuriant ſweets,
To deck ungrateful love:
The roſe or thorn, my numbers crown'd,
As Venus ſmil'd, or Venus frown'd;
But Love, and Joy, and all their train, are flown;
E'en languid Hope no more is mine,
And I will ſing of thee alone;
Unleſs, perchance, the attributes of grief,
The cypreſs bud and willow leaf,
Their pale, funeral foliage, blend with thine.
Hail, lovely bloſſom!—thou can'ſt eaſe,
The wretched victims of diſeaſe;
Can'ſt cloſe thoſe weary eyes, in gentle ſleep,
Which never open but to weep;
For, oh! thy potent charm,
Can agonizing pain diſarm;
Expel imperious memory from her ſeat,
And bid the throbbing heart forget to beat.

Soul-ſoothing plant!—that can ſuch bleſſings give,
By thee the mourner bears to live!
By thee the hopeleſs die!
Oh! ever "friendly to deſpair,"
Might ſorrow's palid votary dare
Without a crime, that remedy implore,
Which bids the ſpirit from its bondage fly,
I'd court thy palliative aid no more;
No more I'd ſue, that thou ſhouldſt ſpread,
Thy ſpell around my aching head,
But would conjure thee to impart,
Thy baliam for a broken heart;
And by thy ſoft Lethean power,
(Ineſtimable flower)
Burſt thoſe terreſtrial bonds, and other regions try,

GERALDINE VERNEY.

LET-

LETTER XIX.

TO MR. BETHEL.

I HAVE been long in writing to you, Bethel, and now hardly know whence to date my letters, as I am, and have been, and ſhall be, upon the ramble for ſome time—I am unhappy, and the unhappy are always reſtleſs.

What a challenge on political affairs does your laſt letter contain!——In the preſent ſtate of my ſpirits I cannot contend with you were I diſpoſed to do it; but I am willing to allow, that much of your eulogium on the conſtitution of England is juſt; and that it is ſo good, that it ought to be better.

If we ſee an individual who has a thouſand good qualities that excite our eſteem and admiration, and yet know he has two or three failings that render all his virtues of little avail, we very naturally ſay, what pity that this man, who is ſo brave, ſo ſenſible, ſo humane, ſhould, by a ſtrange inconſiſtency of character, be ſo corrupt, ſo eaſily led away by objects unworthy of him——ſo warped by prejudice, ſo blind to his own intereſt—And thus it is with all the affairs of life, perhaps; that any degree of perfection makes us regret that the object in which it exiſts is not perfect.

Of this nature is the regret I feel in regard to my country——I would have our boaſt of her excellence juſt—I would not have it the mere cant which we have learned by rote, and

and repeat by habit; though when we venture to think about it, we know that it is vanity and prejudice, and not truth, when we ſpeak of its wonderful perfection; and that even thoſe who are its moſt decided partizans, are continually betrayed into an acknowledgment of its defects.—Boſwell, in his life of Johnſon ſays, that "in the Britiſh parliment, any queſtion, however unreaſonable or unjuſt, may be carried by a venal majority."—This is acknowledged truth; and it follows, that while the means of corruption exiſt to an extent ſo immenſe, there muſt be a venal majority, and, of courſe, every queſtion, however ruinous, will be carried.—While this is the caſe and while every attempt to remedy this *original ſin* of the conſtitution is oppoſed (though the neceſſity of that remedy has been allowed by the greateſt ſtateſmen of our country) while every propoſal to make it *really* what it is only *nominally*, raiſes a cry as if the ſubverſion of the whole empire was intended—I cannot agree to unlimited praiſe—and, though moſt certainly willing to allow to you, that a greater portion of happineſs is diffuſed among the ſubjects of the Britiſh government, than among any other people upon earth; but this rather proves that their condition is very wretched, than that ours is perfectly happy.—Carried on a little in the ſame way, was the argument that I heard not long ſince, *againſt* the abolition of the deteſtable Slave Trade—I was pleading *for it* with a *member of parliament*, who *has an eſtate in the Weſt Indies*, and who has been there himſelf, ſome years ago, when he commanded a man of

war

war—I talked warmly (for I had just been reading the reports of the committee) and I talked from my heart.—My adversary, well hackneyed in the ways of men, treated all I could say as the ill-digested speculation of a hot-head enthusiast, who knew nothing of the matter.—" You are young, Mr. Desmond," said he, " very young, and have but little considered the importance of this trade to the prosperity of the British nation; besides, give me leave to tell you, that you know nothing of the condition of the negroes neither, nor of their nature—They are not fit to be treated otherwise than as slaves, for they have not the same senses and feeling as we have——A negro fellow minds a flogging so little, that he will go to a dance at night, or at least the next day, after a hearty application of the cat——They have no understanding to qualify them for any rank in society above slaves: and, indeed, are not to be called men—they are monkies."—" Monkies! Sir!" exclaimed I, " that is, indeed, a most extraordinary assertion.—Monkies! I believe, indeed, they are a very distinct race from the European—So also is the straight-haired and fine formed Asiatic—So are the red men of north America—But where, amid this variety, does the man end, and the monkey begin? I am afraid if we follow whither this inquiry will lead us, that we shall find ourselves more degraded than even by the whimsical system of Lord Monboddo.—If the negro, however, is a monkey, let me hazard one remark—that their very near affinity to us, is too clearly ascertained

ed by the alliances we have formed with them; nay, I have even heard that captains of our ships of war, have often professed that they prefer the sable nymphs of Africa to the fairer dames of Europe—

"The pale unripen'd beauties of the North."

"And, if I recollect aright, Sir I have formerly, in moments of unguarded conviviality, heard you say, that when you were a young man, and in the sea service, you had yourself indulged this partiality for these monkey ladies."

This parried, a little, the round assertion that negroes were not men; but he still insisted upon it that they had little or no feeling; it was not, however, very difficult to prove, as far as proof can on such a point be brought, that their physical and moral sensibility is more acute than ours.——I will not lengthen my letter by repeating these proofs, because I am persuaded you are not disposed to dispute them; but go on to say, that after I had carried almost every article against him, my adversary was compelled to take shelter under such an argument as yours.—"Perhaps," said he, "the negroes *are* sometimes beat, but not half so much as our soldiers are —The punishment inflicted on soldiers is infinitely more severe."

"Does not that, Sir," said I, "rather prove that our military punishments are inhuman, than that the negroes have nothing to complain of?"

Thus,

Thus, my dear Bethel, it seems to me, that instead of proving that we are extremely happy, you prove only that we are comparatively so; and, for my part, I never could, as many people do, derive consolation from the reflection that the existence of evil in the person of another, diminished the sense of what I felt in my own.

Do not, however, misunderstand me; I think that our form of government is certainly the best——not that can be imagined ——but that has ever been experienced; and, while we are sure that practice is in its favour, it would be most absurd to dream of destroying it on theory.——If I had a very good house that had some inconveniencies about it, I should not desire to pull it down, but I certainly should send for an architect and say, alter this room———it is too dark ——remove those passages——they are too intricate——make a door here, and a staircase there; make the kitchen more habitable for my servants, and then my house will be extremely good——But I should be very much startled if my architect was to say, "Sir, I dare not touch your house——if I let in more light, if I take down those partitions, and make the other changes you desire, I am very much afraid that the great timbers will give way, and the *party-walls* crush you beneath their ruins."

As I do not know when I shall see you, I shall continue to write—and wish very much to hear from you often.——If you send your letters to Messrs. Sibthorpe and Griffith, bankers in London, on whom I draw for money

as

as I want it, they will always be able, during the reſt of my ramble, to trace my route by my drafts and letters on buſineſs.

Adieu! dear Bethel,

Ever your's faithfully,

LIONEL DESMOND

LETTER XX.

TO MR. DESMOND.

Hartfield, Sept. 10, 1791.

I STIFLE, I repress all curiosity, Desmond—I have often told you I never desired to interfere with your affairs, farther than you wished me to do so—farther than you thought I could be useful to you: and therefore, though I read, with wonder and concern, a letter not dated, either as to place or time—A letter, in which the name of Geraldine is not mentioned; and in which you seem not to know either where you are or where you shall be—I will not say more upon it, than that I am always glad to hear of you, upon your own terms.

When will the time come to which I have so long and so vainly been looking forward?—When shall I see you living in Sedgewood in that most respectable of all characters, the independent English gentleman?—I never wanted your society so much as I do now; but, perhaps, never was so unlikely to have it; and all that I find here, is so little to my taste, that I shall be glad to return to Bath, which it is judged necessary for me soon to do.

This dislike of society, however, arises not from its quantity, but its quality—Since Sir Robert Stamford has settled in the neighbourhood, his house, which is almost always full, supplies the market-town with idle or curious morning

morning visitors; and at the coffee-house, where I very seldom go, I happened on calling yesterday, to meet your Uncle Major Danby, and I learned that, attracted by the reputation of Epicurean living, he had accepted the invitation often given by his old acquaintance Sir Robert, and was on a fortnight's visit at Linwell.

I found the Major had collected round him the Curate, the Attorney, the Attorney's Clerk, the Riding Surveyor, the Master of an Academy, "where youth are *genteely* educated," and two or three of the principal tradesmen of the town; and that, from a very long oration on politics which they had heard with conviction and admiration, he had glided away on a descriptive tour to his own seat near Bath; and was giving a *catalogue raisonée* of its conveniences, obliquely preferring them all to the accumulations of the same luxuries at Linwell.

"I own," said he, "Sir Robert has been at a great expence, an immense expence—but the thing, my dear Sir, (addressing himself to the Attorney) the thing is judgment—judgment in laying out money is every thing."

"Aye, Sir, to be sure," answered this gentleman, (who was, I found, an enemy of Sir Robert's, because he was employed in election matters by a great man of the opposite party)—"aye, certainly; and, as you say, how should Sir Robert Stamford have this judgment?—seeing, that it was but a very few years ago that he knew more of

of a *fi*, *fa* and *latitats*, *John Doe* and *Richard Roe*, than about raiſing foreign fruits and ice creams—I don't wiſh to ſpeak in diſparagement of the profeſſion neither——for an honeſt attorney is a very honorable thing."

"And, I am ſure, it is a very rare one, interrupted a blunt tradeſman, in a ſmooth black wig, and leather breeches——a very rare one—and, for aught I ever ſaw or heard to the contrary, you may put all the honeſt lawyers that ever was, in your eye, and never ſee the worſe."

"That's not ſo civil a ſpeech, Sir," ſaid Mr. Grimbold, the Exciſeman; "Sir Robert Stamford, Sir, my worthy patron, is a man of honor, Sir, and a gentleman, Sir; and as for his having practis'd the law, Sir, and thereby raiſed himſelf to his preſent rank, it does him credit, Sir, and ſhews that this government and adminiſtration fairly and juſtly rewards merit, Sir."

"Come, come, Mr. Grimbold," cried the Attorney, "we know very well that the greateſt merit Sir Robert has in your eyes, is his having rewarded *your* merit, and made you a riding-officer; becauſe of the votes for this here borough of ours, that are in your family, Mr. Grimbold—"

"Yes! yes!" ſaid Mr. Doughty, another tradeſman, we underſtand trap, and ſo does our good neighbour—As to me, I am free to ſpeak without favour or affection—We all know what Sir Robert Stamford was—What then!—which of us tha. had been as much

much in luck would not have done the same thing?——I have nothing to say to that—Whatever a man can make in the way of business, whether it be as to lawyer, or a tradesman, or a place at court, is all fair enough; and I, for my part, don't want to cry Sir Robert down, though he does not deal at my shop; he went to Gill's when he settled here—for why? 'Twas natural enough, Gill could command three votes—certain I have but one; but Sir Robert, though he is not a constant customer, lays out a good deal of money with me, and I've no fault to find."

While this conversation, so expressive of the candor and disinterested conduct of British electors, went on, I stood *perdu* behind Mr. Grimbold; a tall personage, whose broad shoulders, however, just permitted me to peep over at the Major, who had not yet espied me—I saw he became extremely restless at being compelled to hear so much of the consequence of his friend Sir Robert, when he was thinking only how he might best display his own—Not very curious in his auditors, he is well contented to be heard; and detests a man who interrupts him worse than a pick-pocket.

He now raised his voice in the vain hope of being still attended to——The worthy Burgesses of W—had got upon a topic much more interesting to them, than a description of pastures, the beef of which they should never partake, and of pineries, the produce of which not even an election could send them a share;

a ſhare; and he therefore buſtled up to quit the circle, when perceiving me, he advanced, and very cordially ſhook hands with me—We walked away together, and fell into converſation on the views, and the ſoil, and the huſbandry in this part of the country; which, he ſaid, was very much inferior to that tract of the country of Somerſet, round his houſe at Aſhford-hall.

This uncle of yours has, to a very extravagant degree, a trait of character which I have, in my way through life, once or twice remarked before—Whatever he does, is better done than any other man living could have done it—whatever he ſays is without appeal—whatever he poſſeſſes is more extraordinary, more excellent, than are the ſame things in the poſſeſſion of his neighbours.

His houſe and gardens are the beſt in the county—his men do more work—his crops are more luxuriant—and ſo fond is he of being always the moſt active and the moſt important, that I have heard him boaſt of having, in his judicial capacity for the county of Somerſet, committed in the courſe of one year, more priſoners to the county jail than any three of his brethren of the bench.

You know, that being an old batchelor, and ſomewhat of an epicure, he is at home, what the vulgar call a cot; and has laid down his ſpontoon for the taſting ſpoon, converted his ſword into a carving knife, and his faſh into a jelly bag—It is not her youth or her beauty, that recommended his preſent favorite houſekeeper; but the

ſkill ſhe had acquired in ſtudying under a French cook, at the houſe of a great man, who acquired an immenſe fortune in the American war, by obtaining the contract for potatoes and ſour crout—But even to this gentlewoman, ſkilled as ſhe is in "all kinds of made diſhes, pickling, potting, and preſerving," and tenderly connected with her, as the prying world ſuppoſes the Major to be; he does not leave the ſole direction of that important department, his kitchen; which when he is at home, he always ſuperintends himſelf.—"Aye, aye," ſaid he, in this laſt converſation, "let thoſe alone for good eating who know what it is to have lived badly.—*I* remember when we were in camp in Germany, and had nothing to drink but water from a pond that ſwarmed with vermin, and not enough of that—and nothing to eat but ſuch bread as I would not now give to my hog—while the money went into the pockets of the contractors."

"You now live in happier times, Major,' ſaid I"

"Aye, that we do, indeed—theſe times are very good times, if the damned ſcoundrels of preſbyterians and non-conformiſts would but let us be quiet that think them good; and not be diſturbing the public tranquillity, and be curſed to the roundheaded ſons of b——s."—Then looking more important, he added, "To tell you very ſeriouſly my thoughts, Mr. Bethel, I don't much like the preſent appearance of affairs—there is a very troubleſome mutinous ſpirit got among the diſſen-

diſſenters—Theſe riots that happened in July at Birmingham"—

"Nay, dear Major Danby," cried I, "it was not the diſſenters who rioted there"—

"No; but it was owing to them and their ſeditious meetings—For my part, I rejoice that they fell into the pit they had dug for others—I wiſh that they had all been blown up together, and the country well rid of them.—I'll tell you what, Bethel, if I had commanded on that occaſion, I ſhould have been apt, I believe, to have protected thoſe honeſt men in what they did againſt your confounded ſaints.—Thoſe canting puritans are all water drinkers, fellows that ſing and pray—I'd extirpate the whole race."

"You would really?"

"Yes, by G——— would I, before they do any more miſchief—What buſineſs have *they* to mutter, and raiſe diſturbances, and complain of their grievances? I hope government will never grant them an ace—let them grumble on, but not influence the opinion of other people.—At preſent I am a little uneaſy at the face of affairs—I have a ſtake in the hedge, Mr. Bethel, a pretty coſiderable ſtake, and I don't deſire to ſee it trampled down."

"I don't know," replied I, "any body that does."

"Yes, yes, but I do know ſuch—You are, indeed, a temperate man—a man who has ſeen a good deal of the world—You have a ſtake alſo of ſome conſequence; ſo, indeed,

and a very valuable one, has my nephew, Desmond——But what d'ye think now of him ?—He's as discontented as any Praise-God-Bare-Bones of them all—I can't imagine what possesses the puppy—he's not like any other young fellow of his age; instead of sporting his money like a man of spirit, on the turf, or with the bones, he goes piping about and talks of unequal representation, and the weight of taxes, and the devil knows what; things, with which a young fellow of six-and-twenty has no concern at all——And then, as for his amours; instead of keeping a brace or two of pretty wenches, he goes sneaking after a married woman———to be sued for damages, and, perhaps, run through the body."

"Sneaking about after a married woman, Sir," said I, "pray explain."

"Come, come, Bethel," replied your sage uncle, "don't affect ignorance—I believe you are a trusty confidant, but here your secrecy is a mere joke—the thing is notorious."

"I must beg an explanation, Major Danby," cried I, with some warmth—"since you think me concerned, it is the more necessary."—"Why, if I must explain then, can you really now suppose that we don't all know the history of Mrs. Verney ?"——"The history of Mrs. Verney, Sir !—Upon my honour I must recommend it to you to speak more cautiously of a woman of whom malice itself cannot injure

jure the reputation—A woman who is an example of a blameleſs wife, to a very worthleſs huſband—and the beſt mother, daughter, and ſiſter———"

"Why damn it now, Bethel, how can you fancy all this will do with me? If Mrs. Verney has a *penchant* for Lionel, with all my ſoul.—I know very well that if the ſtupid puppy, her huſband, had as many horns as the beaſt in the revelations, he deſerves them all, and Deſmond has as good a chance as another, with any woman; but I think he's a fool to be at ſuch a curſed expence about it, and then to fancy himſelf ſo ſnug, like a woodcock that hides its head, and believes itſelf ſecure,—Hah! ha! hah!"

"Upon my word, Major, I muſt ſtill declare myſelf ignorant of your meaning."

He abſolutely ſhouted, in his coarſe boiſterous way, but ſeeing me look very grave, he at length checked his mirth, and ſaid—"Why lookee, Bethel, when a young fellow lays down between three and four thouſand pounds, to releaſe from execution the effects of a man he deſpiſes and contemns; when he goes down *incog.* to the retirement of ſuch a man's wife, and ſtays near a month in her neighbourhood; when he is known to have declined the moſt advantageous offers of alliance from the families of ſome of the fineſt young women in England on her account; and when he is actually, at this time, gone abroad with her; or, however, concealed ſomewhere or other, how

the plague can you ſuppoſe the world will *not* talk? It is well enough known, that Verney is a ſavage and a ſcoundrel, who will ſell his wife to the beſt bidder———Why don't Lionel offer him her price at once, for now you may depend upon it he'll be ſued and Verney will get deviliſh damages."——I was, as you will eaſily believe, thunderſtruck by a ſpeech in which truth was ſo blended with falſehood, that while I was compelled to allow ſome part of it to be true, it ſeemed hopeleſs, with ſuch a man, to contend, that much of it was an infamous ſuppoſition. ——How make your uncle Danby believe, that you ſhould, on a ſyſtem of affection, *merely platonic*, have advanced this money? (of which it is wonderful that he ſhould be informed) *on a ſyſtem merely platonic*, go and live *perdu* in Herefordſhire? *On a ſyſtem merely platonic*, be now concealed in France, in the neighbourhood of Geraldine—for ſuch I am afraid is the fact.—Dear Deſmond! behold the conſequences of your indiſcretion!—See what cruel (and, as I am convinced) what *unjuſt* reflections you have been the means of throwing on the woman you love—conſider all the conſequences that may follow. ——However hopeleſs the undertaking appeared, I endeavoured to convince Major Danby, that in whatever way you might have interfered to be ſerviceable to Mrs. Verney,

Verney, for whom you had a very great friendſhip; yet that all this originated, on your part, not from any deſigns prejudicial to the honour of Mrs. Verney, but from your pity for an amiable woman involved in undeſerved calamities; that you certainly were not in France now, but in the North of England; and that Mrs. Verney was with her huſband."

All the anſwer I could obtain to this was, "Pooh! pooh!——Pſhaw! pſhaw! we know better."—I could neither convince the Major of the fallacy of the reports he had heard, or prevail upon him to name the authors.—Tired with the converſation, and heartily vexed, I left him ſoon after; nor could the account he was again going to begin of his own importance, which is an idea ever uppermoſt in his mind, prevail upon me longer to attend to him.—I returned home, and he went back to Sir Robert Stamford's, there to entertain the reſpectable ſociety (among whom I find is Lord Newminſter and Sir James Deybourne) with an account of *my* conſternation at the knowledge he has of your affairs.

I own to you, Deſmond, that this dialogue has occaſioned to me very cruel diſquiet.—If this letter reaches you before the miſchief is irreparable, by the univerſal diſſemination of theſe reports, ſo injurious to the peace, perhaps ſo fatal to the life of Geraldine; appear, I conjure you, ſhew yourſelf in England—convince her friends

friends and the world that you have *not* followed her to France; and vindicate, at once, her fame and the veracity of

Your faithful servant,

E. BETHEL.

LETTER XXI.

TO MR. BETHEL.

Bexley Hill, near Wells, Somerſet,
Sept. 23, 1791.

YOU lately accuſtomed me, dear Sir, to confide to you the cruel uneaſineſs that preyed upon my heart, in regard to my ſiſter Verney; and ſurely you will forgive me, if I once more intrude upon you—when I am, on her account, infinitely more unhappy than ever, and when I have no friend but you to whom I dare ſpeak of her.

It is now two days ſince I have been in poſſeſſion of a ſixth letter from her, ſince ſhe has been in France; it is dated, as the two preceding letters were, from Meudon; it gives me an account of her ſituation; it deſcribes the ſcene around her; they are her words—her ſentiments—her ideas—and ſhe has even added a beautiful little ode, which as I read it, gave me ſuch a picture of her deſpondent ſtate of mind, as drew tears from my eyes.

As there were, however, ſome parts of this letter which I could not, with propriety, ſhew my mother, as the ſentiments might have raiſed her anger, and the poetry her averſion, I ſaid nothing to her of my having received ſuch a letter.—She, herſelf, had long ceaſed to enquire, earneſtly, about my ſiſter; and therefore, in this concealment, or rather ſilence, I had not to reproach myſelf with breach of duty

ty and tenderneſs, in trifling with maternal ſolicitude.

I believed my mother was quite eaſy about Geraldine, and content not to be at any expence herſelf, was perfectly ſatisfied with whatever diſpoſitions Mr. Verney might chuſe to make about his wife and his children.

You will ſuppoſe then, that I was extremely ſurpriſed yeſterday.—I was at work in my own room, when my mother, about a quarter of an hour after the arrival of the letters from the poſt, entered it; I ſaw immediately that ſomething had diſcompoſed her; but as trifles very often affect her more than things of conſequence, I concluded that her maid had made up her Mecklin lace awkwardly, or had put too much ſtarch in her new Japan muſlin; and that having vented as much of her anger on the poor girl as it was probable ſhe would bear at one ſitting, I was to afford Mrs. Waverly entire eaſe, by liſtening (as in duty bound) to the *reſiduum*; which ſeemed, by its acrimony, to inflame her features, and agitate her whole frame——"Daughter Frances," cried ſhe, "have you heard lately from Mrs. Verney?"

"Yes, Madam."

"And pray where is ſhe"—

"In France, Madam, at Meudon, where ſhe was when ſhe wrote to you"—

"'Tis falſe"—replied my mother, anger flaſhing from her eyes, and trembling on her tongue—"'tis a bare-faced, infamous falſehood, *and you know it is.*"

"Good God! dear Madam! you terrify and amaze me! what can you mean?

"I mean,

"I mean, I mean—I dare hardly truſt myſelf to utter a ſentence ſo diſgraceful—You, Miſs, deceitful, worthleſs, wicked girl, know it, however, but too well."

"My dear Madam, what do I know? For mercy's ſake do not agitate yourſelf thus!—Whatever I know about our poor Geraldine, I am ſure I never made any myſtery of: tell me, I beſeech you, what do I know?"

"Odious, baſe, little hypocrite—you know that this diſgrace to my blood, this viper who is to deſtroy the honour of my family, is *not* in France; perhaps never has been there; but has been, and is, I believe in my conſcience, ſtill at that farm-houſe in Herefordſhire, where ſhe lived before—where ſhe has lain-in—yes, Miſs, lain-in of a girl, and is the declared miſtreſs of that villain, Deſmond, who has been there with her; and perhaps, is with her yet!"

The moment I could recover from my immediate ſurpriſe, the ridiculous impoſſibility of this ſtory ſtruck me ſo forcibly, that my terrors were, for a moment, diſſipated; and I recollected myſelf enough to ſay (perhaps with a look of too much contempt, conſidering it was my mother to whom I ſpoke) "upon my word, Madam, a very curious legend—Have the goodneſs to tell me, to whoſe admirably fertile invention you owe it—If *dear, good* Miſs Elford had not been quite removed from this part of the world, I ſhould have given her the honour of it."

I ſaid this quite by gueſs, and not at all ſuppoſing I was right; but I ſaw inſtantly by my mother's countenance, that my conjecture was

juſt, and my alarm ſubſided ſtill more,—I was now ſure, that, not only this falſehood, but the facts that happened during Geraldine's real reſidence at Bridge-foot, came from Miſs Elford; and having conquered my firſt perturbation, I managed the reſt of the dialogue ſo as to procure from my mother's unguarded warmth, all the intelligence I deſired; though it has not, on reflection, given my mind all the eaſe I expected.—Miſs Elford has a relation whoſe reſidence is at Roſs, and to the houſe of this relation ſhe retired, when overwhelmed with anguiſh and diſappointment, by the ſudden deſertion of her mercenary lover.—The inn where the French nobleman and his *ſuite* put up, was exactly oppoſite this her melancholy retirement—A group much leſs marked by ſingularity of appearance, would have attracted the attention of an inſulated being, eagerly attentive to every occurrence that afforded any thing to gratify her natural love of malicious enquiry, now ſharpened by internal wretchedneſs and diſcontent—The foreigners no ſooner appeared, than Miſs Elford became ſtationary at her window, and ſhe ſaw an Engliſhman with them, in whom ſhe immediately recollected the perſon of Mr Deſmond.

The chambermaid of the inn was well known to her; ſhe contrived to ſend for her over, to pick out all ſhe knew then of the gueſts, and to engage her to make farther enquiries——In conſequence of which the woman ſoon informed her, that Mr. Deſmond had been living ſome time at the cottage at Bridgefoot, very near the reſidence of Mrs Verney;

Verney; that he returned thither before the foreign gentlemen, and afterwards accompanied Geraldine to Gloceſter.———All this, with ſome additions of her own, was tranſmitted to my mother, under the ſtricteſt injunctions of ſecrecy.——This explains all thoſe circumſtances that gave me ſuch pain and aſtoniſhment, when my mother had taken ſuch a ſudden antipathy to Mr. Deſmond, and ſo ſtrenuouſly inſiſted on Geraldine's going to her huſband.

But how ſhall I account for what, on the ſame authority, my mother has now heard, that my ſiſter, attended by a gentleman, the deſcription of whom anſwers to the perſon of Mr. Deſmond, returned to Bridge-foot about three weeks ſince, where ſhe was, in a few days, delivered of a daughter; that her attendants, conſiſting of two women, are French, who cannot ſpeak a ſyllable of Engliſh.——The gentleman, who accompanied her, left the place about ten days ago; but the lady is ſuppoſed to be ſtill there.

I know, that were not Geraldine incapable of ſuch conduct, unverſed in deceit and poſſeſſing a heart as free from guilt as her mind is ingenuous and candid, there are numberleſs other objections to the probability of her being ſo ſituated——Yet, as Miſs Elford had moſt certainly truth for the general ground of her former aſſertions, how is it poſſible to convince my mother that all ſhe relates now is mere fabrication?—How is it poſſible to convince the malicious, prying world of this?—Indeed the particulars are ſo minute which Miſs Elford had ſent, it is almoſt impoſſible

to suppose, that with all her art, or all her malice, she could have the cunning to invent, or the effrontery so boldly to assert them, and to dare any one to disprove facts; which she assures my mother, only her tender regard for her could induce her to bring forward *so* positively—"My heart, *dear*, *dear*, Mrs. Waverly," says the canting prude, "my heart bleeds for every pang which justice and truth oblige me (to prevent your being deceived and imposed upon) thus to inflict on your's!"

Dear Sir! what am I to think of all this?—That my sister Geraldine, whom I know to be in France, should be at this village in Herefordshire, I know is impossible——I own it is much more likely that Miss Elford, through malice or error, or both, has invented the story, or taken some other person for her——Yet, as the report will not only be injurious to the fame of my beloved sister, but may be attended with consequences fatal to the life of *your* beloved friend—I own, that though I despised it at first, I now feel most completely alarmed; and entreat you to have the goodness to tell me, by the return of the post, whether you know where Mr. Desmond is; and whether you think any measures ought to be pursued; and what to prevent the farther progress of a calumny from which so much mischief is to be apprehended.

Imagine with what impatience I wait to hear again from my sister—and how often I have examined and re-examined the contents and the post-marks of those letters I have already

ready received from her.——When an evil, of whatever nature, is certain, the mind, by degrees, acquires firmneſs to endure it; but the pain of uncertainty and conjecture, like what I now ſuffer, is of all others the moſt intolerable—I have not cloſed my eyes during the laſt night; or have I had one moment's tranquillity of mind ſince my mother's angry communication—To add to my exceſſive vexation, ſhe has related the whole, in the moſt unguarded way, to Mrs. Fairfax and her daughter, to my brother and his wife, and to a certain Lord Fordingbridge, who is here on a viſit to Mr. Waverly; and I think, the lover of Miſs Anaſtatia——There are, therefore, no hopes of ſtifling the report; and if I can judge by the manner of the ladies, there is not one of them who fails to hope it may be found true.——Geraldine is too lovely, and has been too much admired, not to be diſliked by women who are ſo remarkable for their wiſh to monopolize all admiration; and they are glad of an opportunity to exclude from the family a part of it, who might, they apprehend, in conſequence of Verney's mad diſſipation, be, at ſome time or other, a weight on the pecuniary intereſt of the reſt.

Lord Fordingbridge met with Deſmond abroad, and ſeems to have conceived ſome perſonal diſlike to him.—My brother has been debating, whether he ought not to apply to him for immediate ſatisfaction; but of his purſuing that idea, I ſhould not have very acute apprehenſions, if I did not ſee that Lord Fordingbridge, towards whom he looks

looks as to an oracle, (for he is reckoned a young man of eminent abilities) did not ſeem very much inclined to urge him to ſuch a ſtep—The whole converſation of the circle here, has been engroſſed by this affair ever ſince yeſterday; of courſe, it is terribly painful to me; but I dare not abſent myſelf from it long together, and have ſtolen the time I have been writing this from my pillow, though not from my repoſe; for, till I am leſs diſtracted by conjectures and apprehenſions, I have no hope of obtaining any.—Pardon, dear Sir, this incoherent letter—I really do not know what I am about; and never in my life had ſo much occaſion for that friendly advice, with which you have ſo often honored and obliged,

Sir,

Your moſt grateful and obedient ſervant,

FRANCES WAVERLY.

LETTER XXII.

TO MISS WAVERLY.

Hartfield, Sept. 28th, 1791.

IT was late laſt night dear Madam, before I received your letter—However I am flattered by being thus honoured with your confidence, the purport of it has given me extreme uneaſineſs—the more ſo, as what I have to ſay, in reply, will not, I fear, relieve you from any part of your's.

I agree with you, however, in opinion—opinion, ſurely, founded on the ſecureſt ground; that our dear Mrs. Verney is incapable of the conduct which is, by Miſs Elford's repreſentation, and Mrs. Waverly's credulity, imputed to her—Yet, convinced as I muſt, on reflection, be of this, I am, at the ſame time, compelled to acknowledge, that there is an air of myſtery in the letters of Mr. Deſmond to me, ſo unlike his uſual ſtyle of confidence and candor, that I account for it no otherwiſe than by ſuppoſing there is ſomething in his ſituation, which it is neceſſary to conceal even from me.

Theſe letters are not dated, ſo that I know not whither they come from, or how long they are written before I receive them—But it is probable that Deſmond is at a great diſtance, as he receives my letters which are ſent to the care of his bankers in London, very long after they are written.

I will own to you, that this reſerve of my friend's,

friend's, which I never, till lately experienced from him, has hurt me extremely—Yet, perhaps, I am wrong; there are circumstances and situations, which a man of honor cannot, and ought not, to reveal to his most intimate friends.

I thought, however, that upon the footing we always have been together, I, who can have no object in view but his service, might attempt to discover how I might more quickly convey my letters to him, particularly as some affairs relative to one of his estates, required his immediate answer—I, therefore wrote to the second partner in the banking-house he is connected with, who is more particularly entrusted with his concerns, and begged an address to Mr. Desmond, stating my reasons for asking it—I received last night a very polite answer from this gentleman, assuring me, that he would convey any letter to Mr. Desmond, as safely and expeditiously as possible; but, that to give his address, even to me, would be a breach of a promise solemnly given, which, he was sure I would not ask him to commit.

What am I to think of this?——and why should Desmond's residence be a secret to me, unless—but I will not torment you or myself, dear Miss Waverly, with conjectures, which I stifle as soon as they arise—Perhaps I may have a letter from him to-day; but as I send this to the post at six miles distance, by the messenger who brings back my letters, I cannot, if I wait the man's return, answer your's so soon as you desire—All I can now do, therefore, is to assure you, that I will send you the earliest intelligence I receive; and if such difficulties

difficulties ſhould ariſe, as make my being near of any uſe to you, in your preſent ſtate of ſolicitude, in regard to friends ſo dear to us both, I will haſten my journey to Bath.— If I have any news of Deſmond by the poſt of this day, I will write to-morrow,

I have the honor to be,

Dear Madam,

With great eſteem,

Your moſt obedient and faithful ſervant,

E BETHEL.

LETTER XXIII.

TO MISS WAVERLY.

Hartfield, Sept. 29th, 1791.

DEAR MADAM,

IN purſuance of my promiſe, in my letter of yeſterday, I encloſe you a pacquet I received from Mr. Deſmond, by the return of my meſſenger——Though it is wholly foreign to the topic that ſo deeply intereſts us, and can ſerve, perhaps, only to encreaſe uneaſy apprehenſions; for it muſt be remarked with wonder, that Deſmond, who, with whatever ſubject he began his letters, generally ſpoke more of Mrs. Verney than any other, now ſeems to force himſelf upon political affairs, (about which, till a few months ſince, he was totally indifferent) in order to eſcape from naming her who once engroſſed all his attention.

The letter came, as uſual, from his bankers in London; and, I own, ſerves rather to irritate than appeaſe my uneaſineſs. I await your farther commands with impatience—

And am,

Dear Madam,

With perfect eſteem,

Your moſt obliged ſervant,

E. BETHEL.

From

From ſome paſſages of the encloſed letter, one would conjecture that Deſmond is in France——I know not what to think of it.

LET-

LETTER XXIV.

TO MR. BETHEL.

I THANK you, dear Bethel, for your account of my worthy uncle, whom you ſeem, indeed, to have ſtudied more than I have done—Perhaps, according to worldly maxims, I have done wrong to have neglected him ſo much; but, to the overbearing and dictatorial conſequence he aſſumes, I never could ſubmit, even if I had happened to *want* the advantage I might have acquired by it.—The groſs epicuriſm in which he indulges himſelf, while he repeats, with exaggeration, the vices of others, are traits of character ſo offenſive to me, that whenever we meet, I am far from gaining his good opinion by flattery and acquieſcence; and find it as much as I can do, to conceal the diſguſt I feel. As we ſee each other, however, ſo ſeldom, and I levy no tax either on his affections or his pocket, I could wiſh he would not remember our relationſhip only to make me the object of his enquiries and his comments.——What buſineſs has he to talk of Mrs. Verney?—he, who never in his life was ſenſible of an attachment to a woman of honor, nor was ever capable of underſtanding ſuch a character as hers.—The groſs and odious reflections which he has taken the unwarrantable liberty to utter, I ſhould find it impoſſible to avoid reſenting, were he ſtill nearer related to me—I hope, therefore, before I ſee him again, that he will

will be furnished with some other topic of conversation, by his coffee-house friends at Bath.—Men who having once had active bodies and inactive minds, are now deprived, by disease, of the former advantage, and are compelled to give to their shallow understandings obnoxious activity; to prevent a total stagnation of existence; or by the silly women, at whose card parties he passes his evenings, many of whom owe the prodigious virtue on which they value themselves, to that want of personal beauty, which prevented their ever being in danger.

"Casta est, quam nemo rogavit,"

says the proverb—Heaven forgive me, if I judge uncharitably, but I very much suspect, that in common minds among the sex, this extreme and exquisite sense of delicacy, which always acquires peculiar energy after thirty-five, is much oftener the offspring of disappointed pride, than angelic purity——Among the good matrons and virgins of this description, my uncle is a very oracle—Among them he retails the conversation of the morning, and they make up together, in their evening vigils, these scandalous anecdotes, from even which Geraldine cannot escape, though, if they had not the power to give her a moment's pain, I am sure they would not give me a moment's thought.—Now, however, she is in France, and these arrows "dipped in double poison," will not, I trust, reach her, unless some "*d—n'd good natured*

natured friend"* ſhould take the trouble, in *pure kindneſs*, to feather the ſhafts ſo as that they may reach her.

I remember, that when I uſed to ſee more of Major Danby than I have now done for theſe laſt years, I uſed to conſider, with ſome degree of wonder, the odd conſtruction of his mind, which nature intended to be a good, plain, common mind; but having acquired a roughneſs, from being early in life a ſoldier of fortune, he ſaw himſelf in unexpected affluence, at a middle period of life, when he had learned the value of money, by having ſtruggled with the want of it—And the moment he quitted his profeſſion, he loſt the open, manly character it gives, and acquired nothing meritorious in place of thoſe qualities; for he became a little of a literary man—a little more of a politician—ſtill more of an epicurean—and above all, a man of great conſequence to himſelf—His mind now reſembles a quilt I have ſeen at an inn, compoſed by the induſtrious landlady, in a ſort of work, which, I believe, the women call patch-work; triangular or ſquare ſhreds ſewn together to form a motley whole—here a little bit of chintz, ſurrounded by pieces of coarſe and tawdry cotton; there a piece of decca work, joined to a ſcrap of dowlas; in one place a remnant of the fine gown of the Lady of the manor; in the next, a relict of the bed-gown of her houſe-maid—So oddly, in the compoſition of my good uncle, is a fragment of gentleman-like qualities tacked

* The Critic.

to

to great patches of obſolete principles and hard prejudices—to an obſtinate adherence to his own gratifications, and a prodigious attachment to his own imagined conſequence—But a truce with the Major---I have beſtowed more words upon him than ever I recollect to have done before, and more than, perhaps, I ſhall ever do again.

In wandering round the world, I hear more of politics than of any other ſubject—and I am always glad to attend to them, when the events under diſcuſſion are of conſequence enough to attract my attention, and detain it a little from the internal wretchedneſs I bear about me.

The enemies of the French revolution are, at preſent, in diſmay—for the King has ſigned the conſtitution, and they begin ſeriouſly to fear that the liberties of France will be firmly eſtabliſhed—Their great hope, however, is in the confederacy of "the kings of the earth" againſt it, particularly that of the Northern powers; which, if they do unite, will be the firſt inſtance, in the annals of mankind, of an union of tyrants to cruſh a people who profeſs to have no other object than to obtain, for themſelves, that liberty which is the undoubted birth-right of all mankind—I do not, my friend, fear that all "theſe tyrannous breathings of the North" will deſtroy the lovely tree that has thus taken vigorous root in the fineſt country of the world, though it may awhile check its growth, and blight its produce; but I lament, that in deſpite of the pacific intentions of the French towards their neighbours, its root muſt be manured with blood

—I la-

—I lament ſtill more, the diſpoſition which too many Engliſhmen ſhew to join in this unjuſt and infamous *cruſade* againſt the holy ſtandard of freedom; and I bluſh for my country!

I muſt, however, remark, that thoſe in whom I have obſerved this diſpoſition, are all either courtiers themſelves, or connected with courtiers—And I know not whether to admire moſt their *Engliſh* ſentiments or *their Engliſh* verſality; for among them, I recollect, are ſome gentlemen, who, three years ſince, when the ſpeeches of Mr. Burke were ſaid to preſs ſo hardly on a gentleman then, and ſtill before the higheſt tribunal of his country, exclaimed againſt the proceedings of that great orator with the utmoſt indignation—They then declared, in all companies, that he proſtituted his eminent talents to the purpoſes of party—and, to the purpoſes of party, ſacrificed his veracity.

But now, when in the book written againſt the patriots of France, he has done the ſame thing——when he advances opinions, and maintains principles abſolutely oppoſite to all the profeſſions of his political life—when he dreſſes up contradictions with the gaudy flowers of his luxuriant imagination, in one place, and in another, knowingly miſrepreſents facts, and ſwells the guilt of a *few*, into national crimes; to prove the delinquency of a whole people ſtruggling for the deareſt rights of humanity, Mr. Burke is become, in the opinion of theſe my courtier acquaintance, the moſt correct, as well as the moſt eloquent of men—for he is of their party—he is become

come the champion of the placeman—and the apologiſt of the penſioner.

As for his political adverſaries, who have taken up the guantlet, he has choſen to throw down—What have they done to excite ſuch a terrible outcry?—They have ſhewn many prejudices, which we have been ſo accuſtomed to, that we never thought of looking at them.

They have endeavoured to convince us of the abſurdity and folly of war—the inefficacy of conqueſt—the impoſition which all European nations have ſubmitted to, who have, for ages, paid for the privilege of murdering each other—Theſe writers have told us what, I apprehend, Locke, and Milton, and Bacon, and (what is better than all) common ſenſe has told us before, that government is not for the benefit of the governors, but the governed; that the people are not transferable like property; and their money is very ill beſtowed, when, inſtead of preventing the evils of poverty, it is taken from them, to ſupport the wanton profuſion of the rich.—And what is there in all this, that in other times, Mr. Burke himſelf, and Mr. Burke's aſſociates, have not repeatedly re-echoed through their ſpeeches?—Once, it is certain, theſe gentlemen ſeemed to agree with Voltaire, who ſomewhere ſays,

"A meſure que les pays ſont barbares, ou que les cours ſont faible, le cérémonial eſt plus en vogue—La vraie puiſſance, & la vraie politeſſe, dedaignent la vanité."*

* In proportion as countries are rude, or their governments feeble, ceremony is more requiſite—True power and true politeneſs, alike diſdain and pageantry and vanity.

But let us allow, in contradiction to Mr. Burke's former opinion, (who once wished to see even the sun of royalty shorn of his superfluous beams) let us allow, that a very great degree of splendor should surround the chief magistrate of a great and opulent nation —Let us allow, that the illustrious personage, who now fills that character, has, from his private and public virtues, a claim to the warmest affections of his people; that towards him and his family, the greatest zeal and attachment should be felt, and every support of his dignity cheerfully given; yet, can it be denied, that the people are enduring needless burthens, with which all this has nothing to do?

Let any man (whose name neither is, nor is ever likely to be in the court-calendar (the red book) look deliberately over it—let him reckon up the places that are there enumerated—a great many of which are sinecures—let him inquire the real amount of the salaries annexed to them, (for *they* are *not* enumerated) and the real services performed—then let him consider whether these places would exist, but for the purposes of corruption —let him reckon of how many oppressive taxes the annihilation of these places, would preclude the necessity.

I might add, that the list of pensioners, could it ever be fairly got at, might come under the same consideration—Is there upon that list *many*, are there *any* names, that have found a place there because their owners have grown old, without growing rich in the service of their country?—Does deserted merit?

does

does indigent genius find, in the bounty of that country, an honorable resource against unmerited misfortune? Alas! no!—To those who have only *such* recommendations, the pursuit of *court favor* is hopeless indeed—But the meretricious nymph receives, with complacent smiles, the superannuated pander of a noble patron, his cast mistresses, his illegitimate children, his discarded servants, his aunts, great aunts, and fifth cousins—If the nobleman himself is a sure ministerial man in the upper house, he is sure of some degree of favor; but it is measured to him in proportion to the influence he has in the lower; and it is to reward *such men*, to gratify their dependents, that the poor pittance of the mechanic is lessened—the prices of the most necessary articles of life raised upon the "smutched artificer," and a share of his fourteen pence a day "wrung from the hard hands" of the laborer.

Either these things are true, or they are not—If they are *not* true, the persons who are interested in the refutation of them, are marvellously silent!—If they *are true*, can your most enthusiastic admiration of our present glorious establishment, conceal from you, that they should be put an end to?

You say, my dear Bethel, that you wish for my society in our favorite county—If ever I should return thither, to meet you, would be my principal, indeed only inducement; but, alas! warm and sincere as my friendship for you is, it cannot alone replace, it cannot make amends for all I have lost; yet, I know, you will say I have lost nothing that

I ever poſſeſſed; and that if I could once determine to look out for ſome other enjoyments than thoſe my romantic fancy had deſcribed, I might yet find as reaſonable a portion of happineſs as any human being has a right to expect—All this may be very true, and very reaſonable; but I have, unhappily, a degree of felicity, impreſſed on my mind, *which was once attainable;* and though I know it is attainable no longer, I am like the unhappy man who is ſaid to have died in conſequence of the love he had conceived for a picture, which, after many inquiries, proved to be that of the fair Gabrielle———I know there are a hundred, nay, a thouſand other plans and people, with whom other men might ſit down contented; but I have made up a "*fair idea*," and loſing that, all is to me a blank.

You are always lamenting, in the warmth of your friendly zeal, that my proſpects are thus blaſted on my entrance into life; but why?—What do you call their being blaſted?—I might, it is true, be a member of parliament, and give a ſilent vote for, or make an unregarded ſpeech againſt government, which my ſlight influence could not render better or worſe——— I might have married ſome fine lady, with a fine fortune, who would have done me the honor to bear my name abroad, and rendered me completely wretched at home: and this you call, my good friend, following my proſpects — Alas! I would not recall uneaſy recollections to your mind, but I muſt aſk---Did *you* find happineſs in this career, which you now lament my neglecting

neglecting to purſue?—Or can you decide, whether I ſhall finally be wrong or right in following one very oppoſite.

It is amazing to me, that with your mind, you cannot comprehend the delight of living only for one beloved object, though hopeleſs of any other return than what the pureſt friendſhip may authoriſe---It is ſtill more wonderful that you cannot underſtand this, when this object is Geraldine, of whom you think ſo highly---Oh! Bethel! is it poſſible you can have ſeen her in thoſe ſcenes which have called forth all the perfections of that lovely mind, and not allow me to be right, when I ſay with Petrarch---

> " Pur me conſola, che languir per lei
> Meglio e, che gioir d'altra—"

Adieu! my friend, continue to write to me; and be aſſured ever of the trueſt attachment and regard of

Your's,

LIONEL DESMOND.

LET-

LETTER XXV.

TO MR. BETHEL.

Bath, Oct. 3, 1792

DEAR SIR,

A SLIGHT indiſpoſition that my mother has had, and the ſudden departure of Mr. and Mrs. Waverly, to viſit ſome diſtant friends of the Fairfax family, brought us back to Bath ſooner than we intended—Your laſt letter followed me hither; and, in thanking you for it, and for that it encloſed from Mr. Deſmond, I have to inform you of ſome very ſingular circumſtances that have happened ſince our return.

I was ſurpriſed yeſterday morning, by the ſervant's informing me that a French gentleman was below, and deſired to ſpeak to me; my mother was in the room, and I could not conceal my apprehenſions, that this ſtranger brought me ſome intelligence of Geraldine—I trembled as I aſked her whether ſhe would be pleaſed to admit him?

"What kind of a man is he?" inquired Mrs. Waverly, ſternly, of Matthew.

"Lord, Madam," replied he, "quite a gentleman-like, handſomiſh-kind of a man; really a good-looking perſon, conſidering he is a foreigner."

"Let him be ſhewn up," anſwered my mother, who had not ſo much intended inquiring after his good looks, as whether they were the looks of a viſitor, or of a ſolicitor

of

of charity——" I cannot speak to him," said she, " you must make out, child, what his business is."

I had not time to analyse the confused emotions I felt, before a gentleman entered the room, who appeared to me one of the most elegant men I had ever seen——If his person prejudiced me in his favor, you may believe that favorable prejudice was not lessened, when he announced himself to be Monsieur de Montfleuri; the intimate and beloved friend of Desmond.

I felt instantly as if I had known him for ages, and was sorry I could not acquire courage to tell him so in his own language; yet he spoke English extremely well, and divided his attentions with so much true politeness between my mother and me, that though she was prepared to dislike him, first, because he was a foreigner, and secondly because he was the avowed friend of Desmond, she insensibly relaxed into a smile, then gave him a general invitation to her house during his visit to Bath; and, before he took leave, even pressed him to make her house his most usual home——He answered, that his stay at Bath would be short, but that he should most undoubtedly avail himself of her obliging permission to pay his respects to her.

He left us——and during his visit had never named Mr. Desmond, but in his introductory speech——I longed to ask him where he was, but was with-held by a thousand fears that have since appeared ridiculous——I would have asked him in French, but as he spoke English so well, it would have been unpolite;

polite; yet I suffered inconceivable anxiety till evening, when I was engaged to go to a ball, at the upper rooms, where, I flattered myself, I should meet him——I was not disappointed——Montfleuri was the first person I saw on entering the room——He immediately came up to me; and as he did not think himself qualified to join in English country dances, and as I was the only person in the room with whom he was acquainted, I disengaged myself from the gentleman with whom I was going to dance, and had a great deal of conversation with Monsieur de Montfleuri, which, of course, turned principally on Mr. Desmond.

You will easily imagine, dear Sir! how earnestly I wished to ask him several questions about his friend; but, though he spoke in the most unreserved terms of the good qualities of Desmond, and of their long friendship, I observed that he carefully avoided saying much of his present situation or prospects—— At length, I ventured to ask him where his friend now was?——He replied, that he did not certainly know, as it was some time since he heard from him——"Is he," said I, afraid of pressing too far on a subject, from which he seemed to recede, "is he in France or in England?"

Monsieur de Montfleuri, whose eyes are the most penetrating I ever saw, looked at me as if he would read my very soul——I shrunk, I believe, from his inquiring and piercing eyes; for, I own, they distressed me extremely——nor did what he said serve to relieve me——"Desmond," said he, "is a very fortunate man, to occasion to you, Mademoiselle,

ſelle, ſo much friendly ſolicitude"——I believe I looked very fooliſh; and though I hardly know why, I was diſcouraged from repeating my queſtion.

But, on conſideration, after I returned home, my anxiety was by no means abated by an interview, which, I had hoped, would entirely ſubdue it——The more I conſidered the converſation I had with Monſieur de Montfleuri, the more I was perſuaded, that there was ſome myſtery hung over the preſent ſituation of Deſmond.——I have ſeen Monſieur de Montfleuri this morning; he dines with us to day; and ſays, that though he came to Bath with no other intention than to pay his compliments to us, and a family from France, with whom he is acquainted; yet he is ſo flattered by the civility he has received, and ſo happy in being allowed the honor of cultivating our acquaintance, that he ſhall prolong his ſtay, and not return to France for, at leaſt, a fortnight.

Dear Sir! how ſhall I remain ſo long in ſuſpence about this odious report?——Yet I feel it to be impoſſible to ſpeak of it to Monſieur de Montfleuri, nor do I dare entruſt my mother with ſuch a delicate negociation; for, it is but too probable, that ſhe would ſpeak of Deſmond, perhaps of my ſiſter, with aſperity that would be extremely improper, and would defeat her purpoſe.

I have reaſon to believe that her intelligence fails, either by the removal of Miſs Elford, or the diſappearance of thoſe objects, whoever they were, that gave her ground for her report; for within theſe few days, my mo-

ther has not renewed the converſation; but ſeems again occupied by ſome ſcheme for the aggrandizement of Mr. Waverly.

In the mean time, I have obſerved, with wonder, the favor Monſieur de Montfleuri has obtained in her ſight——For him, ſhe ſeems to have conquered her averſion to foreigners; and her peculiar averſion to Frenchmen—nay, ſhe is almoſt perſuaded, that ſince he is a partizan of the French revolution, it cannot be quite ſo dreadful a thing as people have repreſented it.—I never obſerved ſo ſtrong and prompt an effect, from elegance of manners, (which he certainly poſſeſſes in an eminent degree) as in this ſudden impreſſion Montfleuri has made on my mother—But it muſt, however, be added, that ſhe has pretty good intelligence as to his fortune, knows it to be a very large one, at preſent, and likely to be much encreaſed by his acceſſion to the eſtate of the Count d'Hauteville, his uncle, whoſe only heir he is.—You know my mother well enough to underſtand, that were Monſieur Montfleuri a Cherokee, or a Chickſaw, his country would be no objection to a place in her eſteem, if he had a *good property;* and his manners and underſtanding, though they were the firſt in the world, no recommendation to her favor without it.

But I am writing on, as if you had nothing elſe to do but to attend to my letters—pray pardon me; and recollect, in my excuſe, that I have not, in the world, any other perſon to whom I can open my heart on the cruel ſubject which weighs upon it.

What

What I mean to ask of you, (though I have made so many digressions, still unwilling to intrude upon you with what may, perhaps, be an improper request) is, whether there would be any impropriety in *your* writing to Montfleuri, to ask intelligence about our friend—Perhaps this is impracticable—if it is, pray forget my asking; and forgive it, in consideration of the excessive anxiety I feel.—I have had no letter from Geraldine; and every hour encreases that solicitude, which I can neither satisfy or repress.

Whatever you have learned, I beg to hear by an early post; and that I may be allowed to remain,

Sir,

Your much obliged,

And most obedient servant,

FRANCES WAVERIAY.

I enclose, in one of the franks that brings this voluminous letter, a billet from dearest Louisa, who impatiently expects your return to Bath.—I have not once broken your injunction, not to take her to a ball, or any public meeting, till you come.

LETTER XXVI.

TO MISS WAVERLY.

Hartfield, Oct. 7, 1792.

DEAR MADAM,

IT is, indeed, impracticable for me to apply to Mr. de Montfleuri, to inquire into the paſt conduct or actual ſituation of Mr. Deſmond; if there are any circumſtances in that conduct with which he has choſen rather to confide to M. de Montfleuri than to me, you will ſee at once the impropriety of *my* expreſſing any curioſity on affairs with which he did not himſelf think proper to entruſt me.—I lament that I cannot, in this inſtance, obey your commands with that alacrity which it would, on almoſt any other occaſion, be my pride to ſhew.

As to the report which you have traced to Miſs Elford, and which has given you ſo much diſquiet, perhaps it is beſt to let it die of itſelf.—I ſhall, in a few days ... I was here interrupted by the arrival of a meſſenger from W. bringing the incloſed extraordinary letter; which, from the direction—"to be forwarded inſtantly"—the poſt maſter ſent over, without waiting for the arrival of the ſervant I uſually ſend——I am too much confuſed, by the contents of this letter, to be able to make any remarks on it; or indeed, to adviſe what ſhould be done.

Let me hear as ſoon as you have received

and

and considered it; and, if I can be of any use, I will instantly set out for Bath—— though I know not what good I can do; or, indeed, what can be done at all.

I am, dear Miss Waverly,

Your faithful servant,

E. BETHEL.

LETTER XXVII.*

TO MR. BETHEL.

Paris Oct. 1, 1791.

IT were vain to attempt secrecy any longer—She is gone! She is gone to meet that very fate from which I have, with watchful affection, being endeavouring to save her. ——I left her only for one day on indispensable business——I found, on my return, that she was set out on a moment's notice for the South of France, by the direction of her husband. Alone!——she is gone alone! and has not taken even a servant with her. ——Her children, to whom she has always been so tenderly attached, she has left at Meudon, to the care of servants; and in such haste did she depart, that she gave no direction whether she should be written to.—It is some infamous stratagem of De Romagnecourt's to get her into his power——And I, fool that I was, have been afraid of openly avowing myself, of taking those measures which would have saved her; and now, perhaps, now it is too late!——Whither can I turn me? what can I do?——To sit down quietly under the apprehensions that crowd upon my mind, is impossible.

I am this moment returned from Meudon, where, by a mere accident I witnessed the

* This letter was enclosed to Miss Waverly by Mr. Bethel,

distress

distress of her servants, left with the children in such a state of anxiety and suspence.—She gave to the young woman, who has long lived with her, all the money she had about her, and an order on Bergasse for more.——This has given me the only ray of comfort I have received—Bergasse may inform me whither she is gone, and I will instantly follow her, whatever may be the consequences.———She said to the servants that Mr. Verney was wounded in a quarrel and lay very ill in the neighbourhood of Avignon; and that thither she was going to him—But it is not so; it is a *finesse* of Romagne-court's, to which her husband has lent his name.——It is impossible to describe to you what I feel—I will leave my letter open till I return from speaking to Bergasse. (Three o'clock)—I have seen him; all he could inform me was, that about five, yesterday evening, Mrs. Verney came to him in great apparent distress.—She read to him part of a letter, written by Mr. Verney, in an hand hardly legible, which informed her of his having been wounded in a scuffle in the streets of Avignon, and laying in great danger at a cottage about two miles from the town, where he entreated her to hasten to him, that he might put into her hands the means of securing his remaining fortune to his children; and ask and obtain forgiveness for all the injuries he had done to them, and to herself.

Bergasse assured me, he endeavoured to dissuade her from setting out alone, on such

ſuch an occaſion, and for a part of the country where to travel, is really hazardous.———She anſwered, ſhould Mr. Verney die, without having ſeen her, ſhe ſhould never forgive herſelf, or ever taſte again one moment's content.———That to perſonal danger ſhe was totally indifferent, and only entreated him to ſupply her family at Meudon with money; and if ſhe did not return within a month, to ſend them back to England, to the care of her mother.—

"I never ſaw," ſaid Bergaſſe, "ſo lovely a woman, nor ever felt ſo intereſted for any one before—I would have laid down my life at that moment, to have ſerved her, but what could I do?——ſhe would not hear of ſending any other perſon to inquire into the real ſituation of her huſband; ſhe would not hear of my procuring any perſon to accompany her, who would, ſhe ſaid, be of no uſe to her———All that ſhe would ſuffer me to do, for her ſervice, was to hire a chaiſe, as lighter and more expeditious than the coach ſhe came in from England——I ſaw her get into it—She promiſed to write to me the inſtant ſhe got to the place deſcribed by Mr. Verney's letter—— I ſaw her depart."

Though it was very true, that Mr. de Bergaſſe could do no more, I could, in the agony of mind I was in, have curſed him, for not ſtopping her—I gave him however, a draft for money, that her children may be aſſured of a ſupply; and I now write this, my dear Bethel, while Warham is gone for the poſt horſes, on

which

wcich I will inſtantly follow this dear unhappy, but ever adorable woman—Good God!—my ſenſes forſake me, when I reflect the hazardous journey ſhe has undertaken; when I reflect that ſhe has perhaps thrown herſelf into the hands of an unprincipled monſter, in a country where he has probably power to execute whatever he undertakes, and where, the confuſion it is in, may give him unqueſtioned opportunity to commit any outrage with impunity—

Warham is at the door with the horſes—I fly to overtake her—that may not yet be impoſſible—this hope alone animates me—

I would write to Fanny Waverly, and to Montfleuri, for all myſtery muſt now be at an end—But I know not, very exactly, where Montfleuri is; and if you ſend this, or the purport of it, to Miſs Waverly, it will ſave me time—God bleſs you my dear friend?—Oh! would you were here to aſſiſt me, in the pious office of ſaving the moſt perfect of human beings, from a fate ſo dreadful, as that, which I am perſuaded, awaits Geraldine.

LIONEL DESMOND.

LET-

LETTER XXVIII.

TO MR. DESMOND.

Bath. in England, this
18th Oct. 1791.

THERE is nothing, you have told me ſometimes, more ſingular than I am---You might have added, unleſs it be yourſelf.---But I am going to give you, my friend, a new proof of my eccentricity, for after having eſcaped till now, and having borne away an unwounded heart, from eyes, the brighteſt that France, or England, or America could produce, I am deſperately in love.---Mad! for your Mrs. Verney's ſiſter, and ſhall moſt certainly marry the lovely little Fanni, if ſhe will accept of me---Why did you not give me notice of the danger that awaited me in coming here? --It was not right to ſuffer me to run into an embarraſſment that you know, I have always had the preſentiment, would be a very ſerious one if ever it came to me---I have vowed a hundred times never to marry, but this beautiful little Engliſhwoman who can reſiſt?---My affairs however, are in a proſperous train---The good mamma looks kindly upon me, and my charming Fanni, does not hate me, if there is any truſting to the language of the eyes---There is a brother it ſeems, to be conſulted; But I imagine, if my goddeſs and I agree, we ſhall neither the one or ther, pay great attention to his

his opinion——I do not love to be long in suspence, and, when I determine to commit a folly, I like to have it over at once—So I go this day to Mistress Waverly, to make my overture in form, for to tell the truth, I have already secured the fair Fanni, who is a little afraid the mother may make some objection, on the account of religion; but I am much in a mistake, or the idol of *her* worship is money; and, if she does not fancy, that since the revolution, all the lands in France have agreed not to bear corn, wine, and oil ——I persuade me that I can make out an account of my estate, which will satisfy all her scruples about the *soul* of her daughter, which assuredly, I shall not lead out of the path that has been followed by the *souls of her ancestors*, or divert, from any other, it may like better to follow—*My* ambition lying quite in *another line*—If I bring matters to a speedy conclusion, I shall be married like a good Lutheran or Calvinist, or whatever is orthodox in the British church——and, having secured my sweet little English woman, according to her own ritual, shall set forward immediately for France———This, I suppose, is the only thing I have done these four years, that will please Monseigneur le Comte d'Hauteville, to whom I mean to announce it in due form.—He may now flatter himself that his family will not be utterly extinguished; but what signifies it, when they will be under the cruel necessity of being only *Messieurs*, and not *Mes Seigneurs*—My good uncle, however, lives in hopes of a counter-revolution, and piously puts up his orisons for

an

an invasion of his native country by Austrians, Russians, and Prussians, to restore Frenchmen to their senses and their *seignories*——The remedy, it must be confessed, is somewhat violent.

I pray you, Desmond, to write to me immediately, and tell me what part of France I shall find you in. I hope you are made quite content by the purport of my last letter, as to the subject of our long and mutual inquietude.—Nothing but silence and prudence is wanting now to put an end to all farther pain upon this affair; and I differ so much from all the rest of the world in such circumstances, that, I think, I have done much better than if I had killed my friend, or been killed myself, because he was amiable, and my sister was a woman.—An Epicurean is, at least, a peaceable animal.—Poor Josephine is quite well in London; and, by this time, you have seen Madame Verney in possession of her charge.—If Boisbelle should have his head broke,* as I think it very likely he may, we might make a double wedding—if, however, Josephine should alter her mind—Unless that happens, I hope you will never meet, though I have no great notion that her convent scheme will hold long.

I direct this to you by your usual address at Paris.—I expect an immediate answer—and your felicitations on my having, at last, taken a resolution to marry, and become an honest

* A broken head in England conveys a very different idea, but "*lui casser la tete*"—means, in the French idiom, to shoot a man through the head, or kill him.

man,

man, which you have so often recommended; I hope I shall not repent it—but I have doubts about the wisdom of it sometimes.—If my wife should be ill-tempered, I shall run away from her—If she should be dull, I shall be weary of her——fatigued, if she have the folly to be jealous of me—and if she be very much a coquette, I shall be jealous of her.—How many rocks are here, in this perilous voyage, on which to wreck one's happiness! —but never mind!—courage!—I am determined to venture——My Fanni is a little angel, and I must have her—There is a good many chances of being reasonably happy with her, at least, for three or four years, and that is as much as any body has a right to expect. ——I find I am unreasonably unhappy without her, and every time I see her I become more and more intoxicated with my passion. How, if our good mamma should refuse her consent?——I do believe, that if such a perverse accident should arrive, I have interest enough with my nymph to persuade her to trust herself with me without it, and take our chance for forgiveness afterwards——But this is unlikely—I shall give the old lady a *carte blanche*, and let her name her own trustees *O! Ca ira—Ca ira!*

Ever devotedly your's,

My dear friend,

JONVILLE DE MONTFLEURI.

Do you not think I improve in my Engliſh? —Since I have been acquainted with my Fanni, I have thrown away my dictionary.

I have undone my letter again, to ſay to you, that I have Mrs. Waverly's full conſent, and am the moſt happy of men.

Evening of Wedneſday,
7 o'clock.

Still I have to add—My Fanni has received the letter you wrote from Paris, the firſt of this month, which you ſent to that Mr. Bethel, who is to be her truſtee.—This haſtens our marriage.—It is fixed for Sunday; and we come to France inſtantly.—I am almoſt as uneaſy as my dear girl is, who has done nothing but weep ever ſince, at the fate of her ſiſter. Deſmond, you have not ever been quite ſo ingenuous with me about Mrs. Verney, as I had, I think, a claim to expect. We ſhall go immediately to Meudon, to the four children who are there; and, ſurely, by the time of our arrival, there will be received ſome account of what is become of you and Mrs. Verney; her huſband too!—I did not think any thing could have given me ſo much concern.

LETTER XXIX.

TO MR. BETHEL.

October 23d, 1791.

NEVER, my dear Bethel, did the moſt feveriſh dreams of fiction produce ſcenes more painful, or more terrific, than the real events to which I have been a witneſs, and in which I have been an actor, ſince the date of my laſt letter——They are far from being yet at an end—With anxiety, ſuch as it is impoſſible to deſcribe, I await the cataſtrophe!—but I owe it to you, to put you, as ſoon and as much as I can, out of the ſuſpenſe and uneaſineſs in which my laſt letter involved you, though, poſſibly, it be only to give you new ſuſpenſe and new uneaſineſs—Before this letter reaches you, however, my fate, muſt probably be decided.

I write from the cabin of a Vigneron, at Salon, near Avignon——How I came hither, and the extraordinary circumſtances that attended my journey, I will endeavour to collect my agitated and ſcattered thoughts enough to tell you.

As well as I remember, I wrote to you very haſtily from Paris, in conſequence of Mrs. Verney's ſudden departure, who was then gone forward alone, to attend her huſband; who repreſented himſelf wounded and dying in the neighbourhood of Avignon; but that you may more clearly comprehend the whole

whole of the subsequent narrative, it may, perhaps, be necessary to tell you how I came so well acquainted with the situation and sudden removal of Geraldine.

You have remonstrated with me so often and so vainly, on my passion for her, that the subject was sometime since exhausted between us——I could not, however, so candidly reveal to you my purpose, as I had, on almost every occasion of my life, been accustomed to do, for reasons, with which she had no concern; but if I did not relate my actions, I attempted not to put on them any false appearance; and since I could not tell you the truth, I forbore to date my letters, and would not mislead you by misrepresentations; which, had I not abhorred every kind of deception, might have been easily done——— I must now, however, relate as much as concerns my own wanderings———undertaken from a motive which, however blameable it might appear, I could not contend with——The event has shewn that, where the *intention* is perfectly pure, it is not always wrong to follow the dictates of the heart, even when they impel us to act contrary to the maxims of the world, and even in defiance of its censure.

Know then, my dear Bethel, that when you sent me intelligence of the sudden departure of Geraldine for France——when I heard, that the persevering infamy of her husband, and the unfeeling brutality of her mother, contributed to drive her into the snare from which I believed, I had seen her secured, when she quitted Herefordshire—I could not patiently await the event———I determined though with anxiety of a very different kind

upon

upon my mind; to follow her, and to protect her, if poſſible, from the wretch, who would thus baſely avail himſelf of his legal right to render wretched, this moſt lovely and injured woman—Compared with her ſafety, every other conſideration on earth was inſignificant; yet I was conſcious that, were it known, even by her own family, I had followed her to France, ſome part of the inconvenience, from which it was the wiſh of my life to ſave her, would be incurred; and that conviction, added to other circumſtances, compelled me to conceal my intentions even from you.

I ſat out for Brighthelmſtone the very next day after I had intelligence of her departure, and travelling along the coaſt, I reached that place late in the evening of the next day. ———Geraldine and her family were at the Old Ship waiting for a wind—I dared not, therefore, go to that houſe, which I on other occaſions uſed to frequent, but I took a private lodging; and ordered my ſervants, who were known, becauſe they have both lived with me ſo many years, to keep out of ſight.

The wind was ſo high and ſo contrary for three days, that the packet ſhe was going in could not get out—It was not poſſible for me to engage my paſſage in the ſame veſſel—Others were on the point of ſailing with the change of the wind; but, as theſe might wait for paſſengers, and I might thus be detained after her, I choſe rather to hire one of the largeſt fiſhing boats, the maſter of which, for a certain conſideration, was to convey me to Dieppe, and to ſail immediately after the packet.—The air of myſtery I was compelled to

observe, and the high terms I was willing to give for a conveyance so apparently inferior to the packets, excited in the fishermen, with whom I opened my negociation, much surprise and many conjectures; the most favourable of which, to me were, that I had been engaged in a duel, and, from its fatal consequences, was compelled to make my escape; or, that I was employed by Government to carry on some negociation with the French aristocratic party, and was going to Paris *incog.* for fear of the *reverbere* of the democracy; yet, I am persuaded, notwithstanding the credit I obtained for these gentleman-like motives, that if there had, just at that time, happened to have been any delinquent sought for by public justice, who was supposed likely to attempt escaping to France, I should have stood a chance of being carried to Lewes, and committed for further examination.

After thirty-six tedious hours, during which I never ventured out but of a night, for a solitary walk along the westward shore, where there was the least danger of my meeting any of my acquaintance, (of whom I found the place was full;) the wind changed, and a steady gale springing from the north-east, the packet came out of harbour in the evening of the second day; and, at seven o'clock in the evening, I had notice from Warham, whom I had sent to *reconnoitre*, that the passengers were about to embark.

I would have given the world to have dared assist the beautiful and interesting exile, who I could only watch at a distance—I buttoned a horseman's coat round me, pulled my hat over

over my eyes, and in a crowd of French and Engliſh who were buſtling around the door of the ſhip tavern, to get their baggage down to the ſhore, I ventured to paſs quite cloſe to the lovely but melancholy group, for which my anxious heart was ſo deeply affected---I ſaw Geraldine pale, languid, and dejected, yet forcing herſelf to appear calm and cheerful, in order to quiet the apprehenſions of her Engliſh ſervant, Peggy, who had never ſeen the ſea before, and now hung back, afraid of venturing on an element which ſhe had beheld a few hours before, black with tempeſt that threatened deſtruction.---The poor girl, who was weeping bitterly, had the youngeſt child in her arms; the old Frenchwoman carried little Hariet; and the eldeſt boy was led by his mother, who endeavoured to quiet his eager inquiries of what they were going to do?

They proceeded thus down to the ſea; I ſtill remained within hearing, for I obſerved that Geraldine was too much abſorbed in attention to her children, to make many obſervations on the objects around her; and I believed, it was impoſſible for her to know me. ---I ſaw her, Bethel, with calm reſolution ſtep forward to meet her deſtiny; for herſelf ſhe ſeemed to ſuffer nothing, but towards the ſea, which was ſtill high, and the rough waves breaking at her feet, ſhe ſeemed to caſt her imploring eyes, and then turned them, humid with tears, which ſhe yet ſtruggled to ſuppreſs, on her children.-- George, who had been very ſilent for a moment, now aſked, whether they were all to go on that great pond?——His mother, in a faultering voice, replied——"Yes, my love, I hope you

are not afraid?"——"No;" replied the dear little fellow, "not afraid, Mamma, of going, if you go—but see how frightened poor Harriet is, let us not take her if she is so frightened."

The little girl, terrified at the noise of the people, and the rushing of the water, now reached out her arms to her mother, who soothed her, as she hid her face in her bosom ——This obliged her to disengage her hand from George, who alarmed at the privation, clung to her gown, fixing his expressive eyes eagerly on her face, and refusing the attention of your servant, honest Thomas, who would have taken him up in his arms——Had a painter been there, who could have been indifferent enough to the scene to have exercised his art, he might have made a sketch of this group that would have spoken most forcibly to the heart—what then must I have felt, who was within ten yards of Geraldine, and dared not speak to her?

The baggage was now stowed, and the boat ready to put off—I had need of all my resolution at that moment, and all the consideration of the ill consequences that might attend my rashness, to prevent my stepping forward to take her in my arms to the boat; but a gigantic son of the ocean, stalked in his sea boots through the waves like another Polypheme, and seizing her and her child, which clung shrieking to her bosom, lifted them into it; while another, with as little ceremony, carried off Peggy and the infant she had the charge of; your good old Thomas took care of the little boy, whom he placed close to his mother; the French gentlewoman followed,

and

and all the paſſengers being now embarked, the boat with a furious craſh, put off from the ſhingles---the ſpray flaſhed over it, and I ſaw in the pale and diſmayed countenance of Peggy, that ſhe gave herſelf up for loſt.------ Geraldine, I believe, was ſenſible of nothing but the terrors of her children, whom ſhe now collected round her, having the two youngeſt of them in her arms and the eldeſt clinging to her---I ſaw her countenance as ſhe hung over them---and never, never ſhall I loſe the impreſſion it made on my heart.

The boat now made its way quickly towards the packet---I ſent Warham away to order my honeſt fiſherman to be ready; and, while my boat was preparing, I went up to the high cliffs on the eaſtern end of the town, to mark the progreſs towards the packet, of that, which contained the being to whom my heart is devoted.

Had I not before determined to follow her, I ſhould now have done it; ſo terrible did the encreaſing diſtance appear, as leaning over the cliff, I parodied the ſpeech of Imogen, and as the boat leſſened to my view, I could, like her, have

"Turn'd mine eyes and wept."

But it was now more to the purpoſe to haſten after her; I ſaw the men were ready. Warham and John had brought and ſtowed my baggage; I went down to the ſhore and threw myſelf into the boat; and deſiring the men to ſet all the canvas they had, the light veſſel overtook and paſſed the packet before it was quite dark, and at four o'clock the next morning

ning I landed at Dieppe, ſome hours before the packet.

I might now, perhaps, without any fear of ſubjecting Geraldine to remarks, have appeared; but I knew ſo well that though the world ſhould be ſilent, ſhe herſelf would be rendered uneaſy by it, that I checked myſelf; and though, on the road, I never was a league diſtant from her, ſhe had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of my being in the ſame country.

At Paris I took up my abode in another hotel in the ſame ſtreet, and as ſhe was wholly given up to her children, and never went out, it was not difficult to eſcape being known.—It was an infinite relief to me to learn, that Mr. Verney was not at Paris, and that Geraldine ſteadily refuſed to take up her reſidence at the hotel of Monſieur de Romagnecourt, whither he had conſigned her———for about eight days after her arrival, ſhe removed to Meudon; and thither, though it could not be done without difficulty, I determined to attend her.

If your friend, my dear Bethel, had been ſo diſpoſed, he could, perhaps, have performed the Proteus of intrigue, as well as any modern hero in that line of acting———but, in this inſtance, ſo far was I from meditating to injure, that my whole purpoſe was to protect from injury the object of my tender attachment—It was, to me, a moſt flattering and ſoothing idea, that I was deputed to watch over this angelic woman, with the fond affection of a guardian ſpirit—I felt myſelf ennobled by the charge, and would not have exchanged the ſublime pleaſure it afforded me, for any leſs elevated indulgence that the epicurean

doctrine

doctrine might offer.—I know, that with all your good ſenſe, and all your right notions of friendſhip, you have no more comprehenſion of this ſort of attachment than of the Roſicruſian myſtery—Not much more, perhaps than Montſieuri, who ridicules my platoniſm as a degree of viſionary inſanity, and believes nothing about it—Not much more, that my worthy uncle, the Major, who has as little idea of true diſintereſted love, as he has of patriotiſm or charity, or rectitude, or of refraining, when it comes in his way, from a good dinner.

As it was leſs eaſy to be concealed at Meudon than at Paris; and as I languiſhed for the pleaſure of gazing, unperceived, on that lovely countenance, I was compelled to take a diſguiſe; the means of doing ſo were offered me by the vicinity of the convent of Capuchins—I need not relate the manner in which, by the help of Warham, I contrived this; it is enough that I ſucceeded without being at all ſuſpected, and was frequently within a few paces of Geraldine and her children—Every hour encreaſing my attachment to her, for I every hour ſaw new occaſion to admire the ſweetneſs of her temper, her tender maternal attention—her mild fortitude, and the graces which ſet off theſe virtues.—Oh! Bethel! this woman, whoſe conduct is ſo irreproachable, while united to ſuch a man as Verney, what would ſhe have been if given to one who felt her value, and endeavoured to deſerve her?—If, contending almoſt ever ſince her marriage with calamity and regret, ſhe has not only ſhewn the nobleſt qualities of the heart, but has cultivated her underſtanding,

ing, and added every ornament to every virtue; what would she have been if the watchful tenderness of unabated love had shielded her from all inconvenience and evil, and left to her only the practice of the milder virtues, and the cultivation of ornamental talents?—But whither am I wandering—in what dreams am I indulging myself?—dreams of what *might have been*; as if to embitter the sad reflection of *what is*; or to irritate the terror with which my soul recoils from the picture of *what may be*.

Yes! my dear friend, at the moment I am writing, and with apparent composure, this long narrative, I know not whether the most miserable destiny is not hanging over *me*; and, at all events, I am certain, that Geraldine must go through as much and as painful suffering as can be felt by innocence—Guilt and self-reproach can alone inflict incurable anguish.

I will, however, since this state of suspence may, perhaps, last much longer, endeavour to command myself enough to continue my narrative.

While I continued at Meudon, I every day, and sometimes every hour of the day, indulged myself with the sight of Geraldine—I saw her morning walks, in pensive meditation, and heard the sigh which anxiety drew from her bosom as she turned her lovely eyes to heaven, to implore its protection for her children; I watched her as she sought the shade at noon, when she sometimes tried to beguile her pain, by playing with them on the grass, or by contemplating the wonderful structure of the leaves and flowers, which they gathered and

brought

brought to her—Sometimes I saw her attempt to read, but her thoughts seemed to wander from her book, and her own situation was too uneasy and uncertain to allow her to attend to the fictitious distress of novels, or moralize on the real miseries represented by history—Her evening walk was always towards the upper gardens, from whence she descended a long flight of steps adjoining the chapel of the old palace, which led to the lower; and there, after her children were gone to their repose, I have seen her sit whole hours; sometimes employed with her pencil, and sometimes apparently absorbed in thought—and failing to recollect it was necessary to return home, till reminded of it by the surrounding darkness.

Oh! what would I not then have given to have dared to approach her? what, to have been sure, that one of those auxious thoughts which crowded on her mind, was fraught with good wishes and good will towards me? —yet, though in these respects I could not be satisfied --indeed, Bethel, I enjoyed, during this period, comparative happiness-- I saw her in present safety, and every hour rendered less, the probability of her husband's schemes being carried into effect; as the return of his friends to their former oppressive power became every day less probable- -I saw her health, which had been very much injured by long solicitude, now visibly amending; for though that solicitude was far from being at an end, the comparative repose she enjoyed, aided by the fine air of this country, had already a visible and happy effect on her frame --The pale rose returned to her cheeks; and

her eyes, though they were often filled with tears, regained their mild luſtre---Thoſe lovely arms which had loſt their beautiful *embonpoint*, when I ſaw her at Bridgefoot, were now "*blanc & potelé*," as when they firſt attracted my admiration---But plain proſe cannot do juſtice to her perſonal beauty; and, I am afraid, if I run into poetry, you will find (if you have not found it already) new cauſe to doubt of, and to ridicule my profeſſions of platoniſm.

Yet, very certain it is, that if I could have ſeen her perfectly freed from all her apprehenſions of future difficulties---if I might have been allowed to converſe with her a few hours every day---have been admitted to a place in her heart, as her friend and her brother, I ſhould have been well content, nor ever have wiſhed (at the expence of diſturbing her tranquility) for any other happineſs the world could afford---So, entirely, do I ſubſcribe to the opinion of a French moraliſt, who ſays,

"Etre avec des gens qu'on aime, cela ſuffit; rêver, leur parler, ne leur parler point; penſer à eux, penſer à des choſes plus indifferent, mais auprès d'eux; tout eſt egal.*"

An event, however, happened, that I had long expected, and which relieved my mind from a weight of anxiety and pain---It was nothing that related to Geraldine; but it made my preſence at Paris neceſſary for ſome hours---I went thither, therefore, on the noon of Wedneſday; and on my return, on the following morning, about twelve o'clock, I repaired, ſtill as a capuchin, (though I now intended, in a few

* La Bruyere.

days,

days, to throw off my disguise) to the spot where, at that hour of the day, I usually saw Geraldine with her children --Alas! there was now no Geraldine!---But after waiting about a quarter of an hour near the spot, I saw the children approach with their maid, and perceived that the poor girl was in an agony of tears, sobbing audibly as she vainly attempted to pacify and appease the dear boy, who was eagerly insisting on being suffered to go to his mamma.

The idea that illness or accident had befallen Geraldine, dissipated, in a moment, all my resolutions of precaution and concealment; without even attempting to disguise my voice, or conceal my features, I spoke hastily to Peggy---"Good God," said I, "what is the matter, and where is your mistress;

The sudden sight of me, in such a place, and in such a dress, added to the terror and confusion of the poor girl, whom I was obliged to support to a seat, where she fell into a sort of fit; and I never felt, I think, more awkwardly and uneasily situated than I did, for some moments, while I endeavoured to reason her into some degree of recollection, and to soothe the eldest boy, who continued to entreat her to take him to his mother; and who, at first, shrunk from my melancholy and uncouth appearance---At length I learned, to my inexpressible terror, that at two o'clock, the day before, an express had been sent to Geraldine by Mr. Bergasse, with a letter, which he had received from the Hotel de Romagnecourt; it was from Verney, and related, that having, with a party of his friends, joined

joined the ariſtocratic ſide in the diſputes exiſting at Avignon, he had been wounded in a ſkirmiſh, where many of his friends were killed---that he lay at a miſerable *auberge*, at the village of Salon, near two leagues beyond Avignon, whither he had, with difficulty, eſcaped---that de Romagnecourt and Boiſbelle had fled farther, and were gone he knew not whither---and that thus deſerted, in a place where there was no medical aſſiſtance he entreated her to ſend him money and ſome friend, who might receive his laſt directions in regard of his family- -He added --" I ſhould aſk you to come yourſelf, if I did not feel conſcious that I have not deſerved your kind attention; otherwiſe, it would be the only conſolation I could receive in dying; r, if I live, you would be entitled to my everlaſting gratitude."

It was this ſentence which determined Geraldine to ſet out immediately———liſtening to nothing but what ſhe believed to be the voice of duty, ſhe gave herſelf no time to reflect on danger which affected only herſelf; and without any other preparation than putting up a ſmall quantity of linen, giving orders about her children, and providing for their ſubſiſtence during her abſence, ſhe ſet out for Paris; and, I believe I related to you, in my firſt hurried letter, her departure from thence, in deſpite of the remonſtrances and entreaties of Bergaſſe, who, ſeeing her ſo determined, could do no more than facilitate and render eaſy the journey ſhe was reſolved to undertake.

Geraldine, unattended, even by a ſervant, had been gone near twenty hours, when I began

began my journey—Every body at Paris told me, that the Southren Provinces were infeſted by aſſociations of ariſtocrats; who encouraged by the hopes of being ſpeedily reſtored to their former ſituation, by the armies which were aſſembling under the exiled princes, had, *en attendant mieux*, armed thoſe who were content ſtill to remain in vaſſalage and had fortified their caſtles, from whence they ſent out parties to attack and deſtroy all whoſe religious or political creed differed from their own; and that it was ſuppoſed to be under the auſpices of theſe great men, that many parties of banditti ravaged the provinces, carrying with them terror and devaſtation; miſeries which were often imputed to thoſe who had armed only in defence of their families and their freedom. Oh! Bethel!--judge what cruel apprehenſions theſe accounts raiſed for the ſafety of Geraldine---They were, indeed, ſuch as drove me almoſt to diſtraction; but I, though I almoſt deſpaired of overtaking and ſaving her from the horrors into which ſhe had ruſhed from a miſtaken principle of duty; the deſire of being ſerviceable to her was the only ſentiment I could attend to; and I therefore added to my own Engliſh ſervants, a Swiſs, who was recommended to me for his honeſty and reſolution, and a Frenchman, who had formerly ſerved me as *vallet de place*, and of whom I had a very good opinion——Theſe four men were completely armed, as I was myſelf, with two brace of piſtols each, and a *couteau de chaſſe*; and as I ſurveyed my little troop, I thought, that if we could once overtake Geraldine, we ſhould

be

be able, at leaſt to convey her in ſafety, to the place of her deſtination.

Juſt as I was on the point of departure by the ſtraight road to Lyons, Bergaſſe recollected, that Verney had directed his wife, in caſe either ſhe or any friend came to him, that they might travel through Clermont, inſtead of the uſual route, becauſe if he was able to be removed, he hoped he might reach the *chateau* d'Hauteville, in Auvergne, where a great number of his friends had agreed, by the conſent of the Count, to a rendezvous ---In this caſe, a letter was to be left at the poſt-houſe at Clermont, to inform her of his being at Hauteville, though this information ſerved only to ſtrengthen my prepoſſeſſion that this was altogether an infamous and treacherous contrivance to put Geraldine into the power of the Duc de Romagnecourt, I determined, at all events, to purſue this road.---At the *chateau* d'Hauteville, I thought I ſhould, at leaſt, have ſome little intereſt on the ſtrength of my friendſhip with Montflueri; and, upon the whole, I conſidered this rather as a circumſtance in my favour than otherwiſe; for though it did not make me leſs apprehenſive of the danger Geraldine might incur, it ſeemed to lend probability to my hopes of being a protection to her.

I find ſhe has herſelf, ſince the preſent ſuſpence, dreadful as it is, has given her leave to look back on the paſt related to her ſiſter the circumſtances of her journey; and as Fanny will ſend you that letter; and I had rather you would learn what paſſed from any hand than from mine; I will only add to this great packet, an aſſurance, that if it leaves you, my friend, in doubt, as to my

fate,

fate, and that of Geraldine ; that uncertainty muſt, in a very few days, very few hours beterminated ; and that exquiſite happineſs, or irretrievable miſery, muſt be the decided lot of

Your's, ever faithfully,

LIONEL DESMOND.

LETTER XXX.

TO MISS WAVERLY.

Oct. 29, 1791.

WHAT ſcenes, my dear ſiſter, have paſſed ſince I wrote to you laſt!—In what a ſcene do I now write!—When I look back upon the paſt, or conſider the preſent, I ſometimes wonder to find myſelf living, oftener doubt my exiſtence!—and aſk, whether the ſufferings I have lately experienced, are not the hideous paintings of diſeaſe on the diſordered brain of a wretch in a fever?—I am now, however, for the firſt time ſince I left Meudon, collected enough to attempt giving you an account of all that has befallen me.

Perhaps I was raſh in plunging into danger, which, before my departure from Paris, Monſieur Bergaſſe forcibly repreſented to me—I hardly dare inveſtigate the real motive of this—for were I to examine too narrowly my own heart, I might, perhaps, find that right actions do ſometimes ariſe from wrong feelings.———Had I loved Mr. Verney, as the poſſeſſor of my firſt affections—as the father of my children—in ſhort, as almoſt any other man might have been beloved, I ſhould not, perhaps, have felt ſo very ſtrongly the impulſe of duty *only*, and ſhould not have been urged, by its rigid laws, to incur dangers, againſt which, the ſervice of pure affection, though

the

the ſtrongeſt of all motives, could hardly fortify the heart.

Being now, however, but too ſenſible, that whatever ſhare of tenderneſs my young heart once gave him, he had long ſince thrown away; and that duty alone bound me to him, I determined to fulfil what ſeemed to be my deſtiny—to be a complete martyr to that duty, and to follow whitherſoever it led.

A wretch, who is compelled to tremble on the brink of a precipice, has often been known to throw himſelf headlong from it, and ruſh to death rather than endure the dread of it—This ſort of ſenſation was, I think, what I felt; and as to my powers of endurance, I was like a victim, whoſe limbs being broken on the wheel, is, awhile, releaſed from it, that he may acquire ſtrength to bear accumulated tortures--The ſhort reſpite I had felt at Meudon, after all my apprehenſions on ſetting out for Paris, had juſt this effect---my ſpirits had acquired energy enough to enable me to ſuffer, without ſinking entirely under them, the horrors that overtook me.

Hardly knowing what I did, and impreſſed only with the predominant idea, that I ought, at all hazards, to attend my huſband, that I might contribute to his recovery, or receive his dying injunctions, I left Paris, by the road he had directed, without even a ſervant, and taking with me only a ſmall packet of linen, and money enough for my journey---I travelled in a ſtate of mind, I cannot deſcribe, during the firſt day, and would have continued to purſue my route during the following night, if my deſolate and helpleſs appearance had

had nôt encouraged the reſiſtance of the people at the poſt-houſes and the poſtillions---I ha no means of enforcing my wiſhes; and was under the neceſſity of ſubmitting to remain in a miſerable poſt-houſe, at a village called La Briare, where I arrived at night-fall—There were, however, women in the houſe of decent appearance; they ſeemed deſirous of contributing, as well as they could, to my repoſe---I obtained, from exceſſive fatigue, a few hours ſleep and by day-break, the next morning, I proceeded on my way, ſuſtained by a ſort of deſperate reſolution which I had never before felt.

The ſecond and third day paſſed nearly as the firſt---I travelled as far as I could find people willing to convey me, and then, in any houſe that would give me a ſhelter, lay down in my clothes.

On the fourth, they told me I was in Auvergne; and, towards evening, I ſtopped at a ſolitary poſt-houſe, ſituated on the edge of an extenſive foreſt, and in a country, where, hardly any traces of civilization appeared—The people who came out, upon my aſking for horſes, had a wild and ſavage appearance—A tall, ſwarthy, meagre figure, preſented himſelf at the door of my carriage, and told me he was the poſt-maſter—I begged of him to let me have horſes to go on towards Clermont——he told me he had none---that a company of banditti, whom, in the preſent ſtate of the police, juſtice had not been able to diſperſe, had been, for many days, ravaging the country, and had taken from him all his horſes---Then it was that, for the firſt time during this melancholy journey, I was

ſenſible

ſenſible of fear———I looked round me, and ſaw only faces which ſeemed to me to belong to the banditti the man deſcribed; and his own had, beyond any I ever ſaw, the terrific look which Salvator gives to his aſſaſſins---The country around was more dreary than the wildeſt heath in England---It was a wide uncultivated plain, ſurrounded with woods, which ſeemed to be endleſs---I knew not, whether to prefer venturing into them, or remain at the gloomy and miſerable habitation before me.---Any debate however, on this point, was ſoon put an end to, by the declaration of the poſtillion who had brought me hither, that he could go no farther.

I now certainly felt, in all its force, the horrors of my ſituation, and fancy even augmented them---There was, I thought, a ſort of ſavage pleaſure on the countenance of the man who called himſelf the poſt-maſter, as he opened the door of the chaiſe---I entered trembling, and hardly able to ſupport myſelf, into a kind of kitchen, which ſeemed to ſerve for every purpoſe, to the groupe of hideous figures that were aſſembled in it---If I had before ſhuddered, at the looks of the men, who ſurrounded my chaiſe, thoſe of three women, who now crowded about me, gave me infinitely more alarm; I know not how, under the immediate impreſſion I felt, I was able to make ſuch obſervations; but the elder of them ſtruck me, as being an exact repreſentation of Horace's Canidia---The two others were younger, and more rebuſt, equally hideous however, and more maſculine---They ſpoke to each other, as they examined my dreſs, in a language of which I underſtood only a few words,

words, repeating often the word, *Anglaiſe!* with an air of deriſion.—A fire of vine ſtalks and turf was made in the chimney of the room, which was floored only with earth, or rather with mud—and never will the circle, that gathered round it, be eraſed from my recollection—The blaze of the fire, threw catching lights upon their harſh features; and, as all their eyes were fixed on me, I fancied myſelf ſurrounded by dæmons.---My imagination flew back to my children; it repreſented my lovely cherubs calmly ſleeping, unconſcious of the ſituation of their unhappy mother; who was now, I thought, torn from them for ever ---Their poor father too, occurred to me---dying, perhaps, in a place equally wretched; among people equally ſavage.---That I had put myſelf into the preſent danger from a motive of duty to him, was the only conſideration that ſupported me---What would have been my reflections if the purſuit of any guilty attachment had led me hither?

Though I did not entirely underſtand the *patois* in which theſe rude people converſed, I yet heard enough to make me comprehend they were waiting for ſome-body; they looked frequently at me, and repeated, "*cette Angloiſe*," and "*nos Meſſieurs*."---The women ſometimes laughed immoderately, and ſometimes one of them went to the door, as if to look for the arrival of the people they expected---this ſcene laſted above an hour. ---One of the women began to prepare ſupper ---a coarſe cloth, diſguſtingly dirty, was ſpread on a board that reached the whole length of the kitchen---The pot *au feu* was brought forward to receive a ſupply of leeks; a large

a large dish of onions and garlic was heated, with something they called beef; and all this was, I learned from their conversation, for *les Messieurs*, whose arrival they awaited.

I felt myself sinking fast under the horrible apprehension, that these expected guests were the banditti of whom I had been told, and that this was an house of rendezvous.---The dreadful stories of murders and assassinations that I had heard, or read of, now crowded on my imagination---I found it would soon be impossible to support myself, and a state of insensibility, at such a period, might subject me to the most hideous insults.---I begged one of the women to give me a little wine--she brought some, which I drank; and, on her request for money, I took out a parcel of *assignats* I had in my pocket---She immediately seized them, and carried them to one of the men, who looked at them by the fire light, then turned towards me his hideous countenance, and grinning horribly, nodded to me, and thrust them all into his pocket.

This seemed as if it would have been the signal to plunder me, if some other project had not been in agitation---I have since been amazed how I retained my senses and recollection under such circumstances of horror! which had now, indeed continued till my aggravated apprehensions were arisen to a height it was impossible long to endure.

But now the feet of several horses were heard upon the *pave*---An exclamation from the people within the house—*Eh! voila donc nos, Messieurs!*" left me no doubt that these were the troop of ruffians who scoured the country for prey---They seemed, however, to be in con-

contention, for voices were heard very loud, and three piſtols went off very quickly.---My ears were then invaded by dreadful groans, as of a perſon killed; groans ſo loud, that they were diſtinguiſhable amidſt the clamour of ſeveral harſh voices, which was now increaſed by the hallooing of the men, and the ſhrieks of two of the women who had gone out from the hovel; where I ſat in a ſtate I have not language to deſcribe; the beldam alone remaining with me, who fixed her terrible eyes upon me, and approached me in an attitude as if ſhe were about to ſtrike me, with a long knife, which ſhe had been uſing over the fire---I aroſe to avoid her, when a figure, covered with blood, ruſhed into the room, ſtaggered towards the chimney, and fell at my feet; at the ſame inſtant, a very loud voice cried in Engliſh---- "Sir! Sir! Mr. Deſmond! for God ſake! Mr. Deſmond!"---My ſenſes then forſook me.

When I recovered them it was yet dark; by the ſingle candle, on a table near, I found myſelf on a ſort of bed in a wretched room; around which, as I caſt my eyes, all the terrors I had paſſed through ruſhed upon my recollection.---There was a rug hung up on one ſide the bed, which concealed ſome perſon behind it; an impulſe of fear made me put it haſtily aſide---and I ſaw, not the hag who had apparently attempted my life; not one of the ruffians from whom I had dreaded greater horrors, but Deſmond himſelf.---"Thank God!" cried he, "ſhe lives!"---Oh! Fanny, the ſound of that voice, thoſe words, the ſuddenneſs of beholding ſuch a friend protecting me ---It is poſſible?---Ah! no, it is not; to convey,

convey, by language, any idea of my ſenſation at that moment---I have, indeed, no very clear recollection of them myſelf, for in a ſhort time my faintneſs returned---I only remember that I gave both my hands into thoſe of Deſmond, who hung over me; and telling him I was dying, recommended my children to him ---bade him carry them to England, to put them under your care---bleſſed him for his friendſhip---and then cloſed my eyes, in the perſuaſion that I ſhould open them no more.

Again, however, the tender attention of this ineſtimable friend reſtored me to life; when I became ſenſible the ſecond time, he was on the other ſide of the bed, bathing my temples with brandy, and chafing my hands; behind him ſtood an Engliſhman, whom I knew to be his ſervant, and whoſe appearance, the moment I recovered myſelf enough to remark it, ſtruck me with new fear---His cheek was cut acroſs, and his cloths ſtained with blood; he held under one arm a caſe of piſtols, and a hanger was ſlung to the wriſt of the other. On a table, cloſe to the head of the bed, lay another caſe of piſtols, and Deſmond had put a broad ſword on the bed.----I turned my enquiring looks on him---he did not ſeem to be wounded, but his whole appearance indicated that ſomething very extraordinary had happened----he was pale, his eys were ſwoln as with extreme fatigue; and, I obſerved, that he caſt them eagerly towards the door of the room, and liſtened anxiouſly to every noiſe.

When he ſaw me again ſenſible, he beſought me to ſwallow ſome wine which he offered

offered me---I obeyed in silence; for I was not, at that moment, able to speak.---I found however my strength and recollection returning; and, at length I asked him the meaning of all I saw.

"Will you, dearest Mrs. Verney?" said he, "will you only oblige me so far as not to ask till you are in a place of safety?"---"Am I not safe," cried I, "any where with you?"---"You should be," answered he, "if my arm, or those of my servants could serve you - if we were sure of being able to protect you against numbers, our lives would be held well sacrificed in the attempt: but the men with whom we engaged last night at the door of this cottage, little knowing the dear invaluable life it contained are free-booters; men, who having been armed by the resisting aristocracy against the *liberties* of the country, have thrown off their allegiance to their employers, and now prey upon its *property*.---In reaching this post-house we met a party of eight of them, who immediately attacked us; we disarmed and wounded two---I hope not to death---The other six, after a faint attempt to revenge their comrades, in which I am afraid a third was desperately wounded, fled to the woods; and we easily repelled the endeavours of the people here, who are their associates, to assist them---The sudden sight of you, to all appearance dead, put every thing out of my head but the necessity of securing these people; which, with my small party I could not so effectually do, but that one of the men is escaped, who, together with the wretches who attacked us, will

most

most certainly return hither; and though in such a cause it is, I think, no boast to say, I feel myself an host; yet I own I dread worse ten thousand times worse than death, the consequences to you, if superior numbers should render my endeavours to guard you, fruitless."

Oh! Fanny! what images of distracting terror did this set before me?---The most dreadful of them was, that of Desmond sacrificing his life to save me.---I was no longer sensible of that weakness which, a moment before, lay heavy on me like the hand of death; but starting up I excalimed---"Oh! Desmond! for God's sake let us go! I am able to go in any manner, indeed I am---only do not leave me, and my strength will not fail me whatever it may be necessary for me to undertake."

"Do you then think," said he, "you could be removed in the chaise?"---I hurried from the bed, protesting I could.---He then told me he had three servants below---one of whom, on his calling aloud, came up---He bade him instantly harness to the chaise whatever horses he could find He did so; and, in a few moment I was, I know not how, seated in it with Desmond; who, I Believe had, with the aid of one of his servants, lifted me down the ladder which led to the lower room; for I recollect that on attempting to descend, my strength and spirits again wholly failed me.

One of Desmond's servants, a Swiss, was mounted as postillion; two English and a French servant rode by its side; and Desmond himself was in the chaise, only preventing

my falling to the bottom by supporting me in his arms.———With my returning senses, however, the consciousness returned of the exertion I ought to make that so much friendship might not be rendered abortive; and that I might not, by being needlessly burthensome to him, endanger his life———I struggled then against the sick languor which had been occasioned by the dreadful scene I had passed—and again inquired, "to what fortunate circumstance I owed the protection he had afforded me."

"Stay," answered he, "my dear friend, stay till you see whether that protection has been effectual!—Let it not now dwell upon your spirits, when they may be required for greater exertions."———"You apprehend danger then?" inquired I.——"Less and less," replied he, "every step we advance; but still, perhaps, there is some——My servants, however, are well armed and resolute and if the worst should happen"———

I dared not ask what—what if the worst should happen?——I cast my eyes around—the dawn just afforded light enough to shew, that we were travelling across an extensive plain, towards the woods that on all sides surrounded it———Into these woods we entered——Desmond looking anxiously from the windows, and directing the driver which road to take——"Whither do we go?" said I, "and is there not danger of meeting these dreadful men again?"——

"There certainly is," answered he———"but the danger would have been greater to have remained where we were——It is now possible we may escape them, and reach

reach the little village of Aiqueperce, which I know is within a league of these woods, and not above six from the château d'Hauteville.

"It is thither," said I, "that Mr. Verney thought it possible he might be well enough to remove—"

"And yet," interrupted Desmond, "it is a very long journey from the neighbourhood of Avignon, where his letter is dated, to the house of Monsieur D'Hauteville."

I cannot, my Fanny, relate all the conversation which was held by fits and starts —Desmond rather declining it, and trying rather to sooth my inquiries, than to satisfy them— While the more I reflected on his arrival at such a place, and at such a time, the more wonderful appeared the intervention of providence in my favour.

I saw that Desmond had some strange suspicions on his mind which were raised by the directions I had received from Mr. Verney, to take such, and so dangerous a circuit to reach Avignon, when the most obvious way was by Lyons ——and I felt, too cruelly felt, that Mr. Verney's former conduct too well justified those suspicions.— Present terror, in some measure deprived me of reflection, or it must have struck me as strange that if Desmond apprehended any danger at Hauteville he should rather bend his course thither than towards Clermont, which he told me was a large town, not much farther distant.

We travelled on through the woods for some miles; it was one of those cold, damp, gloomy mornings, which impresses a dreary

idea that the ſun has forſaken the world. ——The wind ſighed hollow among the half ſtripped trees; and the leaves ſlowly fell from the boughs, heavy with rain—The road, rough, and hardly paſſable, ſeemed leading us to the dark abode of deſolation and deſpair; yet, when I ſaw, as I reclined my head againſt the ſide of the chaiſe, that Deſmond was with me—as I found his arm ſometimes ſupporting me--and heard his voice ſpeaking of hope and comfort, I found that all local evils were unheeded; and that nothing had power to produce again the ſtupor from which I had ſo lately recovered, but the dread of ſeeing his life in danger—My ſiſter! if ſuch a ſentiment ſhould be deemed culpable in a married woman, let the circumſtances, under which it was felt, be at leaſt conſidered before ſhe is condemned.

At laſt we emerged from the fearful ſolitude and approached a lone village, which Deſmond believed to be Aiqueperce; it was not that, however, but another, a league from it—— But as the people ſeemed inoffenſive and hoſpitable, he determined to ſtop there for ſuch refreſhment as it afforded---He would have perſuaded me to have gone to bed for ſome hours, aſſuring me that he would become a ſentinel without the door of my room, to guard againſt every alarm—but, beſides that, I ſhould have found it impoſſible to obtain any repoſe, I thought it better not to looſe a moment in purſuing our journey, and getting as far as poſſible from the part of the country which was deſcribed as being infeſted with banditti---We were yet above ſeven leagues from Hauteville; the greater part of our

route

route lay, according to the account of the villagers, through a country as dreary in itself, and as dangerous from the parties of unlicensed free booters that frequented it, as that we had already passed.--After a slight refreshment, therefore, we hastened on; meeting, indeed, with no impediments but those of dreadful roads.--The horses were quite tired; and though we again stopped to give them food and rest for above two hours, they were so exhausted, that it was with the utmost difficulty, and only in a foot pace, that they crossed the great and wild plain which, as Desmond told me, lay before the avenue to the castle of Hauteville; but it was now dark, and I could discern nothing ---My spirits were quite worn out, and my heart sunk in utter despondence; never indeed could be imagined a situation so strange as mine--I was going, I hardly knew with what hope, to a place where Desmond, while he conducted me thither, seemed to apprehend that dangers and distresses, of which, however, he evaded explaining the nature, awaited me; but he agreed with me in thinking, that as I had there a probability of being informed of the situation of Mr. Verney, I acted right in going--He sighed deeply as he assented to my reasons, and generally concluded the short conversations, which were frequently renewed on this subject, with saying---"At least, while you will allow me the honour of remaining with you, I will defend you with my life."

At length a distant and faint light, glimmering through the trees, told us we were very near the castle; as we approached it the light

light disappeared—and the night was so dark, that the Swiss who drove us, could no longer discern whither he was going.—On a sudden, one of the three horses fell into what appeared to be a deep *fossé*; the harness of ropes fortunately gave way, or the chaise must have been dragged after him——the other horses, however, though down, were disengaged from this, by the breaking of the tackle; and Desmond, leaping from the chaise, snatched me out—and having seen me safe on the ground, advanced with the other three men to the assistance of the postillion.

I was unable to stand—I staggered to a tree against which I leaned, so overcome with fatigue and terror, that I feared my senses would again forsake me.——Desmond having disengaged the remaining horses from the chaise, and sent the French servant forward to try to obtain a light, that the other poor animal might be relieved, came to me; but he was obliged to find me by my voice, for it was impossible to see even the nearest objects.—"Good God! how cold you are—how you tremble!" cried he, as he took my hand—"are you able, no surely you are not, to walk forward?---and yet, perhaps, if you are, it will be unsafe to venture.---Since I was here last, some rude kind of fortification seems to have been made-- There was no ditch around the castle before---and I know no longer how to guide you safely"---I was unable to answer him---He was terrified at my silence; and supposing me again in the situation in which he had so lately seen me, he called aloud for lights and for assistance.—One of the servants came up to him; two of the others were by

this

this time gone to endeavour to obtain admittance into the caſtle, and the fourth remained with the horſes.

The anguiſh that Deſmond ſeemed to feel for me, rouſed me from the ſtate into which I had fallen—I aſſured him I was able to walk on; and he ſupported me, as ſtep by ſtep, his ſervant Warham going firſt; we endeavoured to find, or rather to feel our way towards the houſe.

Every way, however, in front, where Deſmond ſaid there was formerly only a rail, a deep *foſſé* intercepted our paſſage.---The heavy clouds which had occaſioned darkneſs ſo total, were now driven away by the ſudden riſing of the wind; and we could juſt diſcern the *château* before us----and attempt to croſs the ditch in ſome other place by going round it.

When I reflected whither I was going, and to what purpoſe Deſmond was, on my account, incurring ſo much fatigue and ſo much hazard, I cannot deſcribe the emotions that aroſe in my mind; nor do I know how I found ſtrength to traverſe this melancholy place, ſtill finding it inacceſſable.---Deſmond now hallooed in hopes his own ſervants would hear and anſwer him; after near a quarter of an hour, one of them came towards us, but ſtill on the other ſide of the *foſſé*; he ſaid that he had fallen into it in endeavouring to find his way to the houſe, and that it was half full of water, but that he had ſcrambled up on the other ſide, and found one of the entrances to the caſtle, where he had knocked and called in vain for ſome time; that he had then attempted to force the door, which ſeemed,

ed, by some accident, to be incompletely fastened; that he had entered a great hall where the embers were yet a light on the hearth, but that he could make no one hear, and was afraid of going any farther.

Desmond now enquired where he could pass the *fossé*, and bade his servant walk round it, as there must somewhere be a bridge---Within a few paces a slight draw bridge was found, which the man easily let down---We passed it; and he led us to the door by which he had himself entered.

Never was so dismal a place so long and eagerly sought for.---The faint embers served just to shew that it was a large and high vaulted room; but as my clothes were wet through, for it had rained, at intervals, the whole evening, Desmond was so glad to find a fire, that he seemed, in his eagetness for my immediate relief, regardless of all that did not tend to that object.---By this time the English groom, who had also been sent to the *château*, had found the same door; and after having helped to make up the fire, and light a candle, he went out with Warham, to assist the Swiss, who remained with the horses, and to shew him the way over the draw-bridge; the Frenchman only remaining with us.

I now saw, in the countenance of Desmond, an expression of doubt and uneasiness, which alarmed me more than any fears he could openly have expressed————I endeavoured first to convince him that I was less incommoded by my wet clothes than he seemed to apprehend; and then to inquire what he thought of our situation.--"The people you expected to find," said I, "the people whom my

my letter gave me reaſon to ſuppoſe might be here, are certainly not here"—"God knows," replied he, "perhaps theſe men have fallen into the ſnare they have laid for others--The deſperados, whom they have armed againſt their country, have, perhaps, turned thoſe arms againſt themſelves---The ruffians have, poſſibly, driven out the owner of this caſtle, or his friends, for I do not believe he has been lately here himſelf; and it may be in poſſeſſion of ſome ſuch wretches as thoſe we have eſcaped from---It is better, however, to know at once."

"You will not leave me?" ſaid I, terrified at the idea of his going on this ſearch--"Never," replied he, "but with my life; but, when the other men arrive, we will, ſome of us, go round the rooms of the caſtle---That there are inhabitants, the light we ſaw in the windows, and unextinguiſhed embers of fire, aſcertains; that there has exiſted ſome neceſſity for defence, the works around the houſe, which were certainly not here before, leaves no manner of doubt. What Mr. Verney ſaid to you, is evidence enough that here the ariſtocratic party of theſe provinces had a rendezvous; yet, if it were ſtill aſſembled here, it is improbable the members of it ſhould be ſo little on their guard, or that the noiſe we have made ſhould not have alarmed them.

From this converſation I diſcovered, that Deſmond apprehended the place we were in, was in the poſſeſſion of ruffians and banditti---a circumſtance infinitely more terrific than any other that could be imagined---I obſerved that he liſtened to every noiſe---kept his piſtols

in his hand, and inquired ſolicitouſly of the French ſervant whether his fire-arms were properly charged?---I do not believe that a quarter of an hour was ever paſſed in a more uneaſy ſtate; for ſo long it was before the other three men came to us---When they arrived, Deſmond queſtioned them whether they had ſeen any ſigns of inhabitants while they remained within view of the whole front of the caſtle - they anſwered none.

Deſmond then told them, he wiſhed to inquire, be ſome perſons going round the rooms, whether there were any women who could prepare a bed for me; but none of them knew the way---and none of them ſeemed very deſirous of undertaking the exploit without him---while I was as reſolutely determined not to remain behind, if he went---On ſurveying the room where we were, it appeared to be a ſort of ſervants hall---Every thing in it was dirty and in diſorder---The piece of candle which one of the men had found, was nearly extinguiſhed, and we ſaw no means of renewing the light when it was burnt out ---My fears were ſo much greater of the people that Deſmond ſeemed to apprehend were within the houſe, than of any fatigue I could encounter without it, that I could, moſt willingly, have left it without any farther inquiry; but, beſides that, the horſes were incapable of going farther, he, probably, knew that our eſcape was impoſſible---for that, if ſuch were the inhabitants of the *château* d'Hauteville, detached parties of them were in the woods, with whom we ſhould infallibly meet. ———I ſaw, with dreadful alarm, the debate he held with himſelf, what it would be beſt to

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do———At length he determined to see who was in the house; and, securing the door by which we had entered, he determined that we should all go on this inquiry.

He directed Warham to go first with the candle———I trembled like an aspin leaf, as he took my arm within his, to lead me along—the other three servants followed——"Be not so alarmed," said he, as we crossed a long stone passage, "there are five of us; and, I think, any nearly equal number must be fortunate if they gain any advantage."—We now entered a dark and gothic hall—Warham stumbled over something, he stooped and took it up; it was one of those caps to travel in of a night, used sometimes in England, but oftener in France; a bullet had pierced it, and it was on one side covered with blood—Warham, with a countenance where terror was strongly marked, shewed it to his master—I felt that he grasped my arm closer within his, but betrayed no other signs of fear, and calmly bade Warham go on.

We ascended the stairs, and came to a corridor; in one of the rooms opening into it, Desmond told me he had formerly slept—The corridor was long, and several rooms adjoined to it——Desmond thought he heard a sound—he bade us listen!——What a pause of horror!———We distinctly heard the loud breathing of some person or persons——"We will know," said Desmond, "at all events, who they are."

You know that, in France, it is impossible to open a door, from without, but with the key——Desmond, therefore, did not hesitate, having once taken his resolution, but, with a violent

violent blow againſt the door, he aroufed the perſon who ſlept in the room—A loud, maſculine voice inquired what he wanted, and he bade him inſtantly open the door.

I ſhrunk back with dread—for, in a moment, a hideous figure appeared at it, who aſked, why ſuch haſte, and whether they had brought any priſoners?—This ſufficiently convinced me that Deſmond's conjectures were true; and I know not how I ſuſtained my trembling limbs, while Deſmond, without giving the man time for recollection, diſengaged himſelf from me, and ſprung upon him like a lion—"Villain!" ſaid he, "what priſoners!—Your life is at my mercy——Tell me inſtantly—Where is the Count d'Hauteville? and in whoſe poſſeſſion is his houſe.

The man appeared to me to be twice as tall and athletic as Deſmond; but guilt and fear are inſeparable ——He either was incapable of making, or feared to make any reſiſtance, but called for mercy with the moſt abject ſupplications—Deſmond told him it would be granted, on condition of his immediately informing him by what authority he was in that houſe—who was there with him—and to whom he belonged.

The man ſaid that he was one of a troop armed for the defence of the caſtle, by the order of the Count d'Hauteville, who was, himſelf, gone to Italy—That other noblemen, friends to the cauſe, had fortified it againſt the municipal guard, to whom they were determined never to ſubmit—That theſe noblemen had, within a few days, left the place; and that the vaſſals they had left behind, had continued, by their orders, in the caſtle, from whence

whence they had, occaſionally, made excurſions againſt the national guard.

"And againſt travellers," ſaid Deſmond vehemently interrupting him, "whom you have robbed and murdered—Is it not ſo?"

The man denied their having murdered any one, but owned, that they thought themſelves juſtified in plundering the partizans of democracy, who were endeavouring to plunder the noble perſons, by whom they were employed and paid.—The eyes of Deſmond flaſhed fire at this information—"Tell me inſtantly," cried he, "what number of men there is in the houſe?"—"Only myſelf," anſwered he, "and one more, with ſome women that belong to us—The reſt of our gentlemen are out, and when you came, I believed it to be them."——"And how many are there of theſe *gentlemen* out marauding."——"There are eight."

Deſmond, with admirable preſence of mind, ſent two of the men to ſecure the companion to this worthy perſon, who was, he ſaid, in the next room—Both theſe ruffians had been ſo intoxicated the preceding evening, that they were, perhaps, incapable of reſiſtance—They made none——Deſmond's ſervants conveyed them to a room in the moſt ancient part of the caſtle, which was, when the feudal ſyſtem was in all its force, a place of confinement for the wretched vaſſals, over whom thoſe barbarous cuſtoms gave the *ſeigneur* the power of life and death—It was ſtill ſtrongly ſecured; for the privilege, though not ſo often exerted, had never been given up—While theſe men were ſecuring in one part of this building, Deſmond, with his trembling companion ſtill hanging

hanging on his arm, went with the other men and drew up the bridge, thus preventing the entrance of the eight ruffians, who it was likely would immediately return.—Four women were now assembled in extreme terror—Desmond assured them that he waged no war against them, but that he must insist upon their not attempting to give any intelligence to the persons without, and upon their furnishing me with assistance and refreshment.

He then, as we seemed to be now in a tolerable state of security, would have had me take some repose, for he saw that I was hardly able to support myself; this, however, I refused; for I knew that to attempt sleeping in such circumstances would be to no purpose.—As one of his servants had found his way across the *fossé*, of the depth of which he was ignorant, the men who were out for the purposes of robbery, were certainly able to cross it.—I saw still the possibility, nay the probability of danger to him, and of such scenes as my soul sickened at; the cap which Warham had picked up now lay on a great table in the room to which we had returned—and the idea that the murdered body of some unhappy person to whom it belonged, might be concealed in the house, made me shudder as I surveyed it.—Suddenly the supposition that it was, perhaps, Verney himself, occurred to me.—Gracious heaven! what horror accompanied that thought!—Involuntarily I caught the hand of Desmond, who sat anxiously watching my countenance—He inquired eagerly what was the matter.—"Oh! Desmond!" said I, hardly, indeed, conscious of what I said—"Verney is here, I am persuaded he

is;

is; he came hither by appointment of his perfidious friends—they were called away before his arrival, and these their retainers have destroyed him."

He endeavoured to argue me out of a supposition which he saw shook my whole frame. —"If you have any impression of this sort," said he, "I will interrogate the men below; I will myself search the whole house."—"Oh! no, no," replied I——"send your servant to do this, but for heaven's sake do not yourself leave me!"

Warham was then sent with the Swiss round the house; there was no appearance of any person concealed in it, either dead or alive. —The men who were in confinement below, protested that the cap belonged to one of their own people, who had been fired at in retreating before a party of the national horse, and wounded in the cheek.—On this assurance I became easier; but as I still persisted in refusing to go to any bed above stairs, Desmond desired the women to bring down one and lay on the floor of the room where we were; they did so, and he prevailed upon me to lie down, the mere change of posture after so many hours of fatigue and terror, was extremely refreshing.—He had before made me eat of some provisions the women produced, and drink some warm wine.—He now assured me his men were so placed that the people from whom we apprehended danger could not surprise us.—"We are," said he, "five men, resolute and well armed; we have heaven on our side; we have your safety to contend for —and can you imagine that we should be easily conquered?"

"Oh!

" Oh! no," replied I, " I do not imagine it; but the terror of such a scene!---to shed blood even of the misguided wretches whom we fear is so horrible!---Your danger---danger for me too!"---Tears, the first I had been able to shed for many days, now burst from my eyes; I found myself greatly relieved by them---and since I saw how much he wished me to attempt it, I endeavoured, while he sat by me, to rest.--I even fell into a kind of half slumber, from which I started in terror, fancying I heard fire-arms, and saw the horrid visages of the ruffians, but I found Desmond only by me, assuring me that all was perfectly safe and quiet, and I sunk once more into something like sleep---and when I again recovered my recollection, it was morning---Never was the light of day more welcome---for it shewed me Desmond, my generous protector in safety; and I saw his countenance lighten with friendly pleasure, when he found me so much restored.---The women, by this time convinced that we meant nothing hostile to them, or even to the men who had been in possession of the house, if we were not molested, were now in hopes that we should quietly depart; they were assiduous, therefore, in assisting me---My clothes, about which I had never thought, were inquired for in the chaise, and the small portmanteau I had was produced untouched-----Desmond waited without the door, while I, with the assistance of the women, changed my clothes ---A very few moments, you may believe, sufficed me; for I found he was now impatient to pursue the plan which he had settled for me, which was to go on, notwithstanding all

passed

paſſed dangers, to the village where Verney had informed me he was, though this journey was above ſeventy leagues.---Every conſideration of prudence and ſafety urged our immediate departure; the men were ſufficiently refreſhed, and the horſes able to proceed, all but the poor animal which had fallen into the *foſſe*---which was ſo much injured, that Deſmond in mercy ordered it to be ſhot, and it was replaced by that which he had rode himſelf---and which one of the men had led.

Before ſeven in the morning we left this diſmal abode; it was three leagues to Clermont---but we arrived there without meeting the party we had ſo much reaſon to apprehend, and I once more ſaw my invaluable friend in ſafety, after all the perils he had, on my account, hazarded; and here I agreed to take ſome hours repoſe, on condition that he would in the mean time, attend to himſelf.

Early on the following morning we proceeded, Deſmond having hired two men with fire-arms to accompany us; which made the party, he thought, ſo ſtrong as to preclude any apprehenſions from the troops of marauders, of which we were ſtill told.---He went himſelf to the municipality at Clermont, and informed them of the ſituation of the *château* D'Hautville; where it is probable the two priſoners were releaſed by their female friends, as ſoon as we had left them.

I will not my dear ſiſter, ſpeak of any circumſtances of our five days journey from Clermont to Lyons, and from thence to this place ---We met with nothing worth relating after ſuch ſcenes as I have juſt deſcribed; but the converſa-

converſation I had with Deſmond I will repeat as ingenuouſly to you, Fanny, as I repeat it involuntarily to my own heart.

Conſcious as I am of the ties I am bound by, and ſhrinking from every idea of their violation, I will now own to you, that I have long been unable to conceal from myſelf, Deſmond's regard for me, though he never avowed it; but, on the contrary, has entruſted me with connexions he has formed, that were wholly incompatible with ſuch an attachment, if he ever meant to acknowledge it --I am, however, perſuaded he never did; and only the ſingular circumſtances of my deſtiny have made my affected ignorance difficult, and, at length, impoſſible to be ſupported.

Fanny---though I certainly ſhould have preferred Deſmond to every other man in the world, had it been my fortune to have been acquainted with him before I became irrevocably another's---though I have received from him the moſt extraordinary inſtances of generous friendſhip---though he has more than once hazarded his life for me --and once---Oh! how lately, and how wonderfully, reſcued me from death!- perhaps, from worſe than death!--Yet, believe me, when I declare to you, that never have I even in thought, tranſgreſſed the bounds of that duty, which though it was impoſed on me when I was not a competent judge of the engagement I entered into, I feel to be equally binding, and whether my unhappy Verney lives or dies, I have the comfort of knowing, that towards him, my conduct has been irreproachable---I break my melancholy

choly narrative to say this, because I owe it to truth, I owe it to myself---Indulge me then with yet a word on this delicate and painful subject, because I may, perhaps, speak upon it now for the last time.

I learned then in our conversation which became less interrupted and confused, after we left Clermont, that Desmond had never lost sight of me after I quitted England; that he had followed me to Paris, and lived in disguise at Meudon——that a circumstance of a very peculiar nature had obliged him to go to Paris the day I so suddenly received a summons to attend Mr. Verney; but that on his return, finding me gone, and learning, by Mr. Bergasse, by what route, he had pursued me, and but for an accident that happened on the road, he would have overtaken me long before that dreadful night, when he most providentially delivered me from a situation so very terrible, that, in reflecting on it, I sicken with the terror it yet impresses—— When all this my Fanny, was added to the recollection of the circumstances that happened at Bridge-foot, and some (which though I never thought them of much consequence, it was not in my power to obliterate from my mind) that happened much earlier in our acquaintance, it would have been falsehood or affectation, had I pretended to have been ignorant that Desmond's attachment to me was not a common one; but while all its consequences had been to me only good; while he preserved for me the most inviolate respect, and even promoted my executing towards Verney, what he knew to be my duty,

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it would have been folly and ingratitude, had I affected resentment which certainly I did not feel.

Still I am aware that my situation was very strange and very improper, travelling under the protection of a man, whom I knew felt for me a regard which I ought not to encourage, and dared not return——So much obliged to him — esteeming him beyond any other human being; every step I took, being conscious, that I owed to him that I exiled; and all this, while I knew not but that my unfortunate husband was dying, or, possibly, dead ——Alas! I am not a stoic---perhaps my heart is but too susceptible of gratitude and tenderness --How ill my early affections had been replaced, you know but too well!—— But when my husband disdained them, they found refuge with my children and with my sister --Ah! Fanny! but for these resources, should I have been less culpable than so many other young women have been, who have been as unhappily married?——and should I now have possessed what softens the misery of my destiny?—the consciousness of not having deserved it.

Let me still possess this consoling consciousness --I will tell you, Fanny, what I have done to secure its possession still---When I found, too certainly, that Desmond had placed his whole happiness in testifying to me, by his conduct rather than his words, how much he was attached to me, I endeavoured for his sake and for my own, to convince him, that the continuance of that regard, unless it was under the regulation of reason, would be only a source of misery to us both—" If

Verney

Verney should be no more," said I, " or if my earnest endeavours to contribute to his recovery, should fail—What have I either in my heart or my person, to repay such affection?---Alas! nothing!---the bloom of both are gone---*You*, Sir, are in a situation of life to expect the undivided tenderness of the most lovely and fortunate of women---I have nothing but a spirit weighed down by long anxiety—a person no longer boasting of any advantages---and a heart trembling for the fate of three little, helpless beings, who, if my fears do not exaggerate, have but little to trust to from the wreck of their father's fortune—Let me, Desmond, as your grateful friend, point out where, without any of these drawbacks, all the little advantages you found or fancied in me, may be met with—My Fanny possesses them all; and with them an heart worthy of your's uninjured by calamity, and untainted by sorrow."—I will not tell you, my sister, his answer, it was expressive of the high sense Desmond has of your merit—I felt that I had acquitted myself, and while my eyes overflow with tears, I still feel it; for indeed I think I could die happy, if you were married to Desmond, if I knew that you united in giving to my luckless little ones that generous tenderness you are both so capable of feeling; and sometimes, in deploring together, with the soothing sympathy of kindred minds, the fate of your lost Geraldine!

This is the only plan I, at this moment, look forward to with any degree of satisfaction—If poor Verney survives—Alas! I would very fain, but cannot flatter myself, that he will be changed—If he dies—I will retire to some

some cheap country with my children, and never, with my poverty and theirs, embitter the affluent and fortunate situation of Desmond.

But it is time to close my long and distressing narrative, and if I yield to these overwhelming sensations, I shall not be able!—My tears have rendered the last page illegible!

We arrived then, without any very alarming occurence, at the village, from an *auberge* in which Verney's letter had been written—Oh! what was my breathless agitation, as I stopped in the chaise, while Desmond went to inquire for him, I cannot describe, for I could not discriminate such a combination of distracting emotions as at that moment assailed me.—In about a quarter of an hour Desmond returned, and I saw, by his countenance, that I was to expect something very dreadful——"Verney," cried I, "my husband, is he there?—is he living?"—"He is there," replied Desmond; "and I am shocked at myself for having supposed that he was engaged in a scheme of dishonourable treachery, while he lay in all the miseries of indigence and sickness."—I had heard enough, and attempted to open the chaise door—"Let me go to him," cried I, "this moment—let me go."

"Be calm, dear Madam," replied Desmond, "you will need all your fortitude, do not, therefore, exhaust your strength."—"I will go, however," exclaimed I, "nothing shall stop me—Have you seen him yourself?—"I have."—"And does he know that I am here?—"He does—I told him that meeting you by a strange accident, encompassed by

dangers

dangers, into which you had hurried in your anxiety to attend him, I could not quit you till I had seen you hither—He expressed, as well as he was able to express, gratitude towards me, and affection towards you."

Oh! my sister, judge of what I must have felt, when Desmond, after a little more preparation, led me into the room---a miserable room, where lay the father of my children, in a situation which I have not the courage minutely to describe- -His associates had deserted him---his wounds, one of which was, at first, supposed to be fatal, had never been properly dressed, and *now* still (though we instantly procured better assistance) it threatens a mortification; besides this, the bones of his leg had been broken; and it was so ill set, that, on Desmond's procuring a surgeon, he was under the necessity of breaking it again---In a condition, which I will not shock you by painting distinctly, had Verney lain near five weeks, without any money, but what his arms and watch had sold for; nor any attendance, at first, but what the reluctant charity of a woman in the house had afforded him; but as his money failed, that declined also; and had it not been for one of *les sœurs de la miséricorde*, who had left her convent, but still exercised the most noble part of her profession, he told us that he must have perished---Such was the bigotry of the people in this part of France, that this worthy woman was reproached for her humanity by the savages of the village, and told, that in trying to save the life of an *heretic*, she offended God- -Though this heretic had fallen in a *defence* (from whatever motive) of the very party which so piously consigned him to death, for

for differing, as they ſuppoſed, in opinion—Alas! poor Verney had never any opinion at all; and now had hardly expreſſed, in a languid and indiſtinct voice, his gratitude for my attendance, before he beſought me to prevent the *curé* of the pariſh from perſecuting him hourly with his viſits and exhortations; Deſmond undertook to do this; but the charitable nun came every day; and, indeed, without her aſſiſtance, I ſhould have ſunk under the fatigue I have endured ever ſince I have been here, now four days.

I need not remind you of the unhappy propenſity Verney has long had to intoxication—In this habit he has indulged himſelf ever ſince he has been told that it endangers his life; and when he is abſolutely denied it, he ſinks into a ſullen or torpid ſtate, and complains that I will let him die of faintneſs and dejection.

Oh! Fanny! when I ſee him ſuffer, and trace in his countenance, diſtorted, pale, and disfigured as it is, the likeneſs my dear boy bears to him, I forget all I have ſuffered—I pardon all his faults—I endeavour to apologize even for thoſe which I fancied he intended to commit—and I pray to heaven for his life—and that he may be happy with his children—That Being alone, in whoſe hands are life and death, knows what is beſt—My only reſource againſt the long anxiety I have gone through, againſt that which is to come, is in the conſciouſneſs of having done my *duty*—I am, in ſome meaſure, rewarded, even now, by the unwearied, the generous, and ſurely the diſintereſted conduct of Deſmond, who, whatever *may* have been his motives, or his wiſhes,

reſpect

respects that sacred duty; and never has, since my arrival, uttered one word that could make me reproach myself with having listened to him.

Oh! what a heart is his!——how truly brave!——how manly!—how generous!—Though he has no reason to love Desmond, the tenderest friend, the most affectionate brother, could not shew more constant attention to his ease.—Yesterday, overcome with the fatigue of sitting up two nights, in order that the directions of the surgeon, after the last horrible operation, might be strictly followed, I lay down, for a few hours, in my clothes, leaving the young woman-servant of the house in the room, who promised to call me if Mr. Verney wanted any thing---Desmond was gone to the place where he lodges, to write letters to England, which he was promised an opportunity of sending that afternoon, or this morning—Quite exhausted by excess of fatigue, sleep fell heavier upon me than it has done for many, many days, and when I started from my unquiet dreams which still haunted me, I found it was five o'clock.

I stepped softly towards the room where Verney lay, where I heard him talking in a loud and peremptory voice, his face was flushed even to a purple hue; and he was arguing angrily with Desmond, who hung over him, speaking soothingly to him, and entreating him to be patient!—to be pacified!—As I approached, I saw that Verney darted towards me a look of anger and reproach, while Desmond had a countenance so expressive of concern for us both!—Ah! Fanny! I found that the poor, imprudent patient had bribed, by a promise of,

a crown, the fooliſh girl that had been left with him, to bring him wine and brandy, of which he had drank ſo liberally, that the fever which he had, to all appearance, baffled, by compelling his abſtinence, threatened to return —It was, indeed returned, and delirium ſucceeded; this laſted till towards morning, during all which time, Deſmond ſat by him, often keeping him, by force, in bed, from which he would otherwiſe have ruſhed, notwithſtanding his fractured limb—The ſcene was often too much for me—at four o'clock he became more calm, and then Deſmond prevailed upon me to leave the room, promiſing to remain with him.

This morning he ſeemed a great deal better —declares himſelf ſenſible of his folly, and aſſures us he will be governed—He no longer complains of pain, and, I think, I have never ſeen him ſo compoſed as ſince eight o'clock to-day; it is now ten at night—The ſurgeon has not been here to-day; but Verney has been ſo cool and rational, and ſlept ſo much, that I have been enabled to finiſh this letter, which I began yeſterday morning.

I own I now have leſs apprehenſions of him than I have ever had—His age—his naturally good conſtitution, are ſtrong circumſtances in his favor; and I may remark, my Fanny, I hope not unkindly remark, that Verney does not ſuffer, as many people do, great irritation of ſpirits, from exceſs of ſenſibility; and if he is tolerably free from bodily ſufferings, feels no injury from the emotions of the mind.

Still his condition is, I know, precarious— Still I have much to ſuffer with him, and for

him

him—I am, however, relieved, by having thus diſburthened my poor heart to you!—Pray for me, my Fanny—for my children—and for the poor unfortunate ſufferer their father.—Perhaps, before you receive this, for it is a long way from hence to England, he will be well—perhaps he may not need your prayers! I will contrive to write, from day to day, but now I muſt cloſe my letter, as this is the only chance of ſending it off for ſome time.

That heaven may watch over the happineſs of My dear Fanny, is the warmeſt wiſh of her.

GERALDINE.

LETTER XXXI.

TO MR. BETHEL.

Salon, Nov. 10, 1791.

IT is all over, my friend —— Verney is gone! ——— The torpor and tranquillity which I described to you in my last letter,* were the beginning of a mortification, which proved fatal twenty hours afterwards---He died yesterday morning. --I will not attempt to describe the behaviour of his angelic wife, nor the comfort it is to me to reflect, on the exact and rigorous attention she has been enabled to give to this unfortunate man at the close of his life, so that her gentle heart, when the first shock has lost its force, will be restored to its tranquillity, and may taste of happiness which no self-reproach will interrupt.

Peace to the ashes of poor Verney! and may his faults be forgotten by the world, as his divine Geraldine has forgiven them.——— Bethel! his last act of his life should plead his pardon for every folly with which it was stained.---He was not, till a very few hours before his death, convinced that there was no hopes; he then seemed to collect himself as if to shew how much better he could die than he had lived.

He suffered no pain, and was in perfect

* Which does not appear.

possession

poſſeſſion of his ſenſes; he bade Geraldine leave him alone with me, and thus ſpoke to me—

"Deſmond! I know that your friendſhip for me cannot have been ſtrong enough to induce you to make all the kind exertions for me, which you have done ſince you have been here; nor, indeed, to bring you hither---- I have been told, by ſeveral people, that you have always been in love with my wife---Perfectly ſecure of her honour, more ſo than I deſerved to be, not naturally of a jealous temper, and engaged in the pleaſures of the world, as long as I had money to enjoy them, I never heeded this; and, if my informers meant maliciouſly, they loſt their aim.---I am now dying, and I owe it to you, that death comes not with all the aggravated horrors of poverty and wretchedneſs---I know you to be a man of honour, and if Geraldine marries again, as there is certainly reaſon to believe ſhe will, it is to you, rather than to any other man, that I wiſh to conſide her and my children."

It would be very difficult for me, Bethel, to deſcribe my ſenſations while this paſſed---I anſwered, however, ingenuouſly and with truth---"that I certainly had always preferred Mrs. Verney to every other woman, but that my attachment had been unknown to *her*, and never would have led me to tranſgreſs the bounds of honour towards *him*; but that if ſhe ever was at liberty, I ſhould deem the happineſs of becoming her protector the firſt that fate could give me."

"Let me," ſaid he, "while I am yet able, make

make a will in which I will give you, jointly with her, the guardianſhip of my children.—Poor things! I have nothing to give them; but the ſettlements made on my marriage has prevented my making them entirely beggars—Perhaps, my dear friend, my death may be, for them, the moſt fortunate circumſtance that could happen——I have been miſerably cheated; perhaps ſome of my affairs may be retrievable."

He then deſired me to call up my two Engliſh ſervants, before whom he dictated to me a memorandum, in which he left his wife and his children to my care, appointing her executrix, but requeſting that I would be the guardian of his children, jointly with her; and expreſſing his wiſhes, that if ſhe ever took a ſecond huſband, it might be his friend Deſmond.--this he ſigned; it was witneſſed in due form, and when that was done, he gave it me and bade me keep it.—He was fatigued, and aſked for a medicine which Geraldine came in to give him—he then fell into a ſort of ſtupor, rather than ſleep—when he awoke Geraldine was alone with him—I know not what paſſed, but when ſhe ſent for me I found her drowned in tears, and Verney evidently dying—In a few moments he expired in her arms.—Bethel, if I had not hopes of living with her, ſuch a death would excite my envy.

There was no affectation of violent affliction in his lovely widow—the natural tenderneſs of her heart, the thoughts of her children, and the circumſtance of their father's dying ſo far from his country, and in conſequence of his

unhappy

unhappy connections, were enough to produce those severe paroxysms of grief in which I saw her for the first twelve hours—at the end of that time she became more calm.—As I found it was her wish that the remains of her husband should be conveyed to England, I determine that it should be done, and gave orders accordingly.

Mournful as the scene was, I reflected on what the situation of Geraldine would have been had I not been with her; and felt a degree of satisfaction which the possession of worlds could not bestow.

It is now time to consider of our return to Meudon—I have been entreating her directions; but I see the circumstance of going, so recently a widow, with a man of whose attachment to her she cannot now be ignorant, is very oppressive to her delicate sense of propriety; yet, very certain it is, that the whole world united to censure it, should not induce me to quit her an instant.—Hitherto her mind, weakened by long anguish, has not recovered firmness enough to decide.—She weeps, and tells me in a voice rendered inarticulate by her tears, that she leaves the direction of all to me.

Adieu! dear Bethel, as soon as I know our route, I will write again, in the hope that you will continue to let me hear from you.—Will it seem unfeeeling if I *say* that I am a *happy* fellow? I do not know—but I am sure I should be very *stupid* if I did not feel that I *am so*—I mean, however, only comparatively happy, for I intend to be a great deal happier; but

but I know that it muſt be many tedious months firſt.

November 11, 1791.

I had ſealed my letter, and was diſpatching it by a meſſenger to England, with ſeveral from Geraldine to her family, when I was amazed by the ſudden appearance of my friend Montfleuri, who, ruſhing into a lower apartment of the poor houſe I inhabit in this village, threw himſelf into my arms; and, before I could recover my ſurpriſe, diſengaged himſelf, and put into them his wife; on whom, with undeſcribable aſtoniſhment and pleaſure, I recognized Fanny Waverly, the ſiſter of my Geraldine.

I was very glad that this unguarded introduction was not made to her inſtead of to me; for in her preſent ſtate of mind I know not what might have been the conſequence.

I contrived that the knowledge of her ſiſter's being here, of whoſe marriage ſhe was entirely ignorant, might not reach her ſo abruptly---I had the inexpreſſible happineſs to find that ſhe conſidered this arrival as the moſt fortunate circumſtance that could have befallen her---With what delight does ſhe gaze on her ſiſter---how affecting, how intereſting is the tender friendſhip betwen them.

Montfleuri and I have now ſettled every thing for our journey immediately---We ſhall quit this place on the day following to-morrow; and he is to ſend ſome of his own ſervants, with two of mine, in whom I can confide, to attend the laſt offices that can be done

done for poor Verney—This ſad ceremony being over, we go to Montfleuri, and from thence to Paris, or rather to Meudon.—*Now*, there is nothing wrong or improper in my attending Geraldine—Bleſſings on the lovely little Fanny for coming hither.—If Montfleuri ſhould forget his good reſolutions, and relapſe into that libertiniſm which was his only fault, I ſhall not forgive him; but, at preſent, he ſeems the moſt truly happy, as he is always the gayeſt creature in the world.

LETTER XXXII.

TO MR. BETHEL.

Meudon, Dec. 26th, 1791.

MY EXCELLENT FRIEND,

FOR ſo, I perſuade myſelf, I may call you —I write to you by the expreſs wiſh of our dear friend, Deſmond, who begs me and *ma douce* Fanni, to tell you what he thinks we can ſay better than he can himſelf.

And, indeed, he is ſo occupied with his love and his hopes, diſtant as they muſt be, that he ſometimes ſeems to lament the neceſſity of acknowledging that any other perſons in the world have a right to ſhare his thoughts or his affections—If he can ſit whole hours, ſilent, in the room with Geraldine, he is content—If he knows ſhe is engaged, or unwilling to be in company, he takes her children in his arms———— he plays with, he careſſes them; and ſtill he is content.——I thought I had been tolerably in love, when I determined on an affair, ſo entirely out of my way, as marrying; but my love is really of ſo humble a ſpecies, when put by the ſide of this ſublime paſſion of my friend's, that I am afraid my amiable *Fanchon* will diſcover the difference, and be diſcontent with me.

But all this is wandering from my purpoſe, which is to tell you, that we are haſtening to England, where we hope to be within this month.

I hate

I hate writing long letters; and therefore I will only relate what Desmond tells me he wishes you to know.——You have, before now, received the commissions with which he troubled you about poor Verney, and we are satisfied will execute them.

We bring with us four children; and that there may be no more mystery about this; that Geraldine's reputation may not suffer, which otherwise it might do, even in your eyes, I will confide to you the truth.

I was so indiscreet and thoughtless as to encourage in the gay and unguarded heart of my sister de Boisbelle, an affection for Desmond, while he was at my house, little imagining the cruelty I was guilty of towards them both.—Indeed, I knew, that Josephine had been married against her inclination; and had an attachment, almost from her infancy, to a naval officer, a near relation, which, I supposed, guard enough against any other impression; and though I used to rally her about Desmond, I was so prepossessed with this idea, that the possible consequence of encouraging her apparent preference to him, never occurred to me.—When he was wounded at Marseilles, I flew to him, and Josephine went with me——We attended him through his alarming illness, and when political business called me away, I delegated to my sister the task of taking care of my friend.

No part of the event was to be wondered at, unless it was the greatness of mind which Josephine evinced——As soon as she became too well assured that the consequence of her indiscreet

indiscreet attachment could not be finally concealed, she determined to save Desmond from any resentment which I might have felt, by declaring to me, that it was to her own unguarded folly, and not to any art or deception on his part, that the blame was owing—She told me he had promised nothing; that he used no art to betray her; but, on the contrary, had told her that his whole soul was dedicated to another.——Should I have been wise, under these circumstances, to have destroyed my friend? or to have given him a chance of destroying me?——I think it was much more rational to endeavour to conceal what could not be amended——I did so; and it was *Josephine*, whom *I* attended, that caused such speculation at Bridge-foot; and who, being taken for Geraldine, occasioned to my wife all the terror and uneasiness she has since described to me.

Her going thither was concerted between Geraldine and Desmond; and it was to the generous tenderness of Geraldine that my sister consented, and Desmond determined to confide their child.

My sister, as soon as she recovered, went to London; and I took care that her infant, which was a girl, should be conveyed to Paris, as Desmond seemed anxious, that wherever Geraldine was, the little creature might be put under her protection——It was to meet and convey this charge to her, that Desmond left Meudon on the day that Geraldine so abruptly quitted that place.—My sister is since gone to Italy, and is now under the protection of Monsieur d'Hauteville—Her husband has

not

not been heard of since the night in which Verney received the wound that cost him his life—If he is dead, and my relation de Rivemont, ever returns from the East-Indies, where he has, for three years, been stationed, it is probable that their first attachment will end in a marriage; but I shall never deceive him as to what has happened in his absence.

Thus, my dear Sir, I have acquited myself in informing you of what, though Desmond owned it was necessary you should know, he could not prevail on himself to relate to you.

Have you not heard in England, that Mr. Verney, an English gentleman, travelling for his amusement, has been inhumanly fallen upon by a party of the national troops, and killed?——This is, I understand, the report that has universally gained credit; yet, I beg to assure you, that it was in attempting to drive the French from Avignon, which, in a fit of desperate valour, his party undertook; and not in any tumult, or even by the hands of ruffians, who are equally the dread and scourge of all parties, that Verney fell; and that, as I believe, Boisbelle has fallen also.

But thus it is, that, throughout the revolution, every circumstance has, on your side the water, been exaggerated, falsified, distorted, and misrepresented, to serve the purposes of party; and thus I, as well as Desmond, fear it will continue to be——Probably much more cause will arise for it than has yet arisen; for, according to every present appearance, the hydra, despotism, is raising in every country

country of Europe one of its deteſtable *heads* againſt the liberty of France.

Should this arrive, it is true, I ſhall be torn from a circle of friends, where the happineſs of my *life* is placed, to draw the ſword once more; but he muſt be a deſpicable wretch, who, in ſuch a cauſe, would refuſe to ſacrifice his life itſelf.

In the mean time, however, let us not waſte the moments, as they are paſſing, in dark ſpeculations on the future; which, after all, we cannot arreſt or amend———It is ſtill more fooliſh to embitter the preſent with uſeleſs regret; and, as to the paſt,

> " Mortels!——voulez-vous tolérer la vie?
> Oubliez, & jouiſſez,*"

is a very good maxim.

Dear Sir! I wiſh you all happineſs with your amiable family——And am, with ſincere reſpect,

Your moſt faithful

And devoted ſervant,

ONVILLE DE MONTFLEURI.

* Voltaire.

LET-

LETTER XXXIII.

TO MR. BETHEL.

Bath, Feb. 6th, 1792.

COME, my dear Bethel, I beſeech you come hither, and render by your preſence, ſtill more happy, thoſe friends for whom you have ever been ſo generouſly intereſted—Come and ſee Geraldine reſtored to her tranquillity, and your happy friend every day more tenderly attached to her; and reckoning (with impatience he vainly endeavours to ſtifle) the months that muſt yet elapſe before ſhe can be wholly his.—Oh! were you to ſee her—were you to witneſs, in addition to all her former charms, her behaviour to a mother, who was once ſo harſh, ſo ungenerous, ſo cruel to her; were you to ſee the compaſſionate attention with which ſhe treats her old friend, Miſs Elford, whoſe malicious repreſentations coſt her ſo dear; were you to behold the tender ſolicitude which ſhe beſtows equally on her own children, and on my little girl, you would love her a thouſand—oh! a million times better than ever; and would, with me, bleſs the hour when I did not, when, indeed, I found *I could not*, take your advice and *forget her!*

Bethel, my dear friend, come to me I beſeech you, that I may have ſomebody to whom I can talk of Geraldine when I do not ſee her——Montfleuri is too volatile; he loves his

his wife paſſionately, but my adoration for her ſiſter he cannot comprehend; and, by the reſt of the people, I ſee it would be underſtood ſtill leſs.

And yet there are many, many hours when I am obliged (by theſe deteſtable rules, to the obſervance of which we ſacrifice ſo many days, and hours, and years of happineſs) to be abſent from her.—Oh! 'twould be an alleviation of their inſupportable tediouſneſs, if you would let me talk to you about her, and hear all the plans I have laid down for happineſs—If you will come only for a fortnight I will return with you into Kent; it will be ſome amuſement to me now, to ſettle an houſe which, in eight, or *at fartheſt* ten months (for it is now above three ſince ſhe has been a widow) Geraldine may inhabit—I can waſte a month or ſix weeks there—She ſeems to wiſh it; for, I believe, I ſometimes frighten her by my reſtleſs and vehement temper—yet ſhe may do with me what ſhe pleaſes; it is only when I am divided from her, to comply with ſome ridiculous whim of ſome formal and ridiculous old woman, that I loſe my temper.—When I am with her I am patient and tranquil—unleſs an idea croſſes me, as it does now and then, that I am unworthy of the exceſſive happineſs of being her huſband, and that ſome dreadful event will tear her from me!——If ſhe looks pale, though only from ſome ſlight cold or accidental fatigue, I fancy her about to be ill, and weary her with my apprehenſions and inquiries—She bears with all my folly patiently; or if

ſhe

ſhe chides, it is with a ſweetneſs that makes me almoſt love to be chidden.

Will this lovely, this adorable woman, be indeed mine?—Did I tell you, Bethel, how ſucceſsfully I had managed the affairs of her children?——Scarſdale ſeemed diſpoſed to give me a great deal of trouble, but now it is all ſettled.—Theſe dear infants will be leſs injured by their father's imprudence than I apprehended; and for their future deſtiny, as to pecuniary concerns, their beloved mother is no longer anxious.

Heavens! dare I truſt myſelf with the rapturous hope, that on the return of this month, in the next year, Geraldine will bear *my* name ——Will be the directreſs of *my* family—— will be my friend—my miſtreſs—my wife! —I ſet before me theſe ſcenes—I imagine theſe days of happineſs to come—I ſee the beloved group aſſembled at Sedgewood.—My Geraldine—You, my dear Bethel——your ſweet Louiſa—my friend Montfleuri, and his Fanny.—I imagine the delight of living in that tender confidence of mutual affection, which only ſuch a circle of friends can taſte.—I go over in my imagination our ſtudies, our amuſements, our rural improvements; a ſeries of domeſtic and ſocial happineſs, for which only life is worth having—I believe, I truſt it will be mine, and I exclaim—

Viver coſi vorrai,
Vorrai morir coſi!

Heaven grant it!—But till that hour arrives, when the aſſurance of ſuch felicity is

more

more completely given me—Oh! lend me, dear Bethel, ſome of your calm reaſon to check my impatience; and ſoothe, with your uſual friendſhip, the agitated heart—which, whatever elſe may diſturb it, will ever be faithfully grateful to you, while it beats in the boſom of your

LIONEL DESMOND.

THE END.